



Aaronovitch: my prince of wails

Commentators, page 17

Why it takes two to rule the waves

Weekend

THE INDEPENDENT

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SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 1996

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WEATHER Sunny spells, light winds

Blair scorns furious union leaders

COLIN BROWN
and BARRIE CLEMENT

Tony Blair last night rejected demands from furious trade union leaders for Stephen Byers, his shadow employment minister, to be sacked over unscripted remarks in a fish restaurant which led to reports that the historic links with the unions and Labour were to be severed.

"He's not going to be sacked," one senior Blair aide said. This puts the Labour leadership in a head-to-head confrontation with some of the most influential trade union leaders in Britain after the clashes at the Blackpool TUC conference. Most unusually, even the TUC general secretary, the normally diplomatic John Monks, entered the fray. In his final address to the annual congress, he pointedly accused the party of creating "confusion" rather than "clarity".

"Millions in this country are desperate for a change of government," Mr Monks said. "I am looking for a surer touch from them in future." Union leaders registered their unanimous anger that their deliberations at the conference had been hijacked by the briefings and statements from Labour.

The row over party-links was preceded by widespread coverage of Labour's plans to curb industrial action and Mr Blair's call for a ban on the Royal Mail dispute. The sticking point for party traditionalists is over severing all links with the unions, who remain Labour's masters. A leadership source said: "Our relationship is changing, but divorce is not on our agenda."

However, the donations of £1m by an animal rights group and one of the backers of Chelsea football club herald the day when Labour will be less dependent on unions for financial support. That would be hastened by the advent of state funding for parties, which is supported by the Labour leadership.

When Le Pen says there is no such thing as racial equality, French opinion might be expected to take this in its stride. It is, after all, part and parcel of the views generally associated with the extreme right, whether in France or anywhere else. But that, for Mr Le Pen's critics, is precisely the point, as Mr Le Pen's supporters march through Marseilles today, the importance of his comments will be clearer.

Mr Blair is keen to show that he is not in hock to the unions. "Middle England" would "not be fooled", Brian Mawhinney, the Tory Party chairman, said. Mr Blair's advisers may count the rows at the TUC conference as unfortunate, but not unhelpful if it gets that message across in the longer term.

Lightly grilled, page 2

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QUICKLY

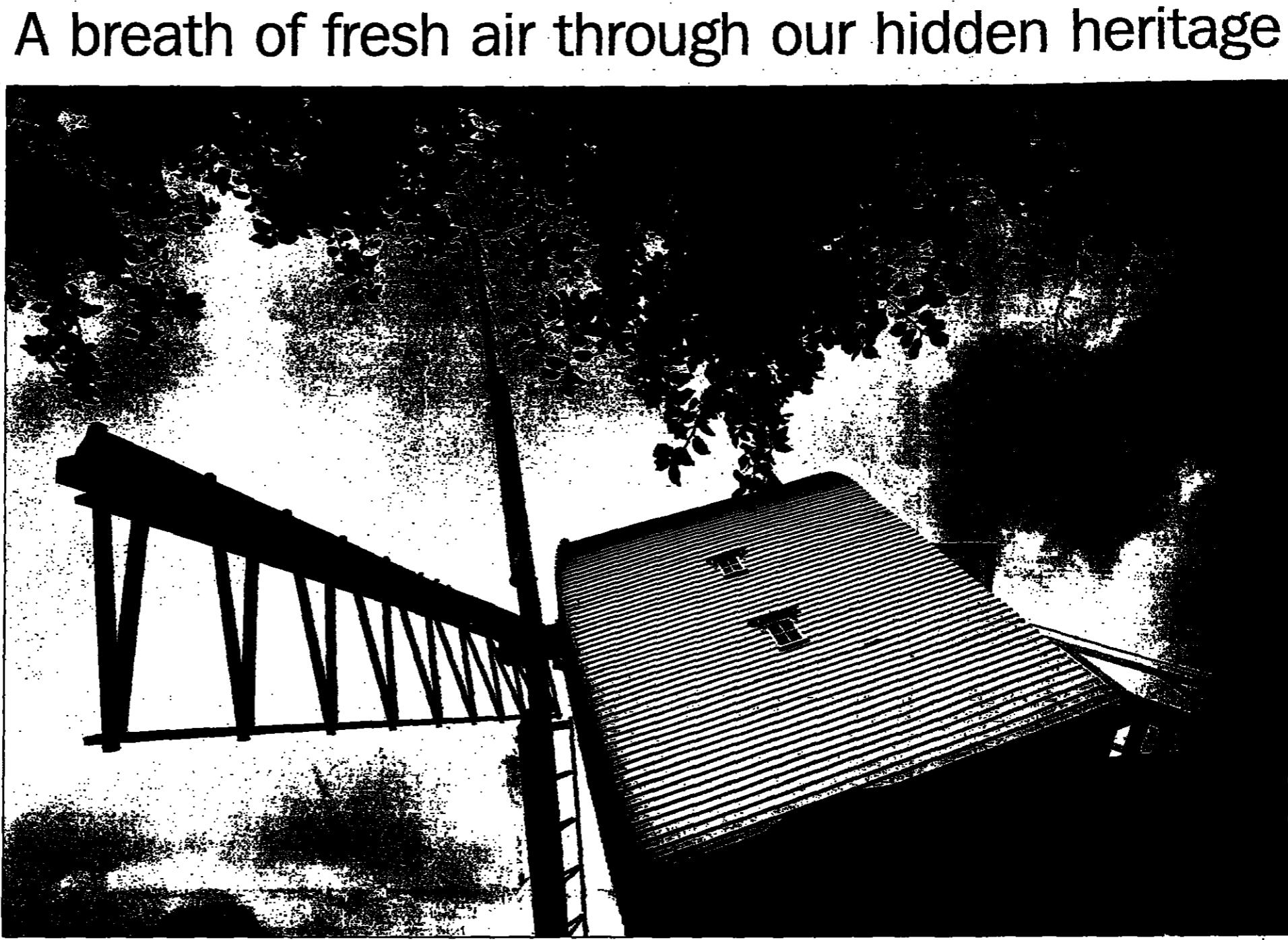
£60m sell-off profit

A second privatised arm of the Government's property agency has produced a windfall profit – this time more than £60m in three years – for the "fat cats" who took it over, *The Independent* has learnt.

Page 5

Dealers on a high

Dealers are braced for the FTSE100 share index to break through the psychologically important 4,000 barrier next week after reaching a new record high of 3,967.9 yesterday. Page 20



Finchingfield Windmill in Essex, which today and tomorrow is opening up the mysteries of its gears, hoppers and millstones for public inspection. The 18th century windmill is one of 2,000 buildings, including houses, museums and power stations, opening up as part of the Department of National Heritage's Open Days '96 event. Photograph: Brian Harris

The races are unequal. It's what every Frenchman thinks privately

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

"Yes, the races are unequal. I am only saying in public what most French people think in private." The words are shocking. What is not quite so surprising is the identity of the speaker: Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of France's extreme-right National Front (FN).

When Le Pen says there is no such thing as racial equality, French opinion might be expected to take this in its stride. It is, after all, part and parcel of the views generally associated with the extreme right, whether in France or anywhere else. But that, for Mr Le Pen's critics, is precisely the point, as Mr Le Pen's supporters march through Marseilles today, the importance of his comments will be clearer.

The great and the good in France and much of the country's liberal opinion are in a lather of indignation over the remarks by the FN leader in which he said that "races are inherently unequal". Henri Emmanuelli, the former leader of the Socialist Party, and others are calling for Mr Le Pen to be taken to court and for the National Front – a legally constituted political party in France – to be banned. Even some Gaullist politicians have joined the fray, calling for "the law to take its course".

The affair originated two weeks ago, when Mr Le Pen was

Openly racist remarks by Jean-Marie Le Pen, the National Front leader, have put France in a rage of indignation



Believer in inequality: Le Pen addressing the National Front's annual May Day rally in Paris. Photograph: Reuters

pressed by a French journalist covering the National Front's summer school to say whether he believed in racial equality. After several attempts at ducking the question, Mr Le Pen finally gave the journalist what he wanted: his view on "inherent racial differences". As days went by, Mr Le Pen was encouraged to elaborate. His only further explanation was to say that "You had only to watch the Olympic Games on television to see that the races are not equal." Whatever that means,

The affair has made the front page of almost every national and regional newspaper in France. "Should the National Front be banned?" asked the left-of-centre *Liberation*. "The polemic around Le Pen", said the pro-government *Figaro*, while *Le Monde*, whose journalist had asked the original question, offered an elegant fence-sitting editorial.

Law officers decided that

Mr Le Pen's remarks did not

constitute an offence. They ap-

peared to have concluded that

expressing an opinion about racial inequality was not the same as "discriminating on racial grounds" or "inciting racial hatred" – both of which are offences. The question is, therefore, why the affair has stirred such a furore in France.

Seasoned French political observers, say it reflects the fact that although Mr Le Pen might have been assumed to hold such views on race, he had never actually said so. Hearing his views expressed so baldly, at a time when French politicians and the media have learnt to approach racial subjects with caution, has come as a shock.

There could, however, be another explanation for the explosion of this latest Le Pen scandal just now. Last weekend, a 16-year-old boy was stabbed to death in Marseilles. The killing took place in the very centre of the city in broad daylight and the story headed the following evening's television news. The dead boy, Nicolas, is white, and the son of a doctor. A 16-year-old boy of Arab origin has been arrested in connection with the killing, which has inevitably raised the already high racial tension in the city.

Every six months or so, said

one French commentator yes-

terday, Mr Le Pen provokes a

scandal that serves to draw

attention to his party; it is part of

his political technique. It is a

very effective technique; and it

is one against which a liberal

society has few defences.

England squad won't play ball

DAVID LLEWELLYN

England squad. It was unclear whether Epru had made a counter offer to those players.

The RFU revealed last Thursday that it was offering contracts of up to £70,000 to members of the England squad. It was unclear last night whether Epru had made counter offers.

As the situation stands, the likes of Will Carling, Jeremy Guscott and Dean Richards will be unavailable to play for England, who would have to take the field with a team of unknowns.

However, Epru is confident that it could organise an alternative international tournament, as clubs and players from the other nations may follow their English counterparts in breaking away from their ruling bodies.

The England players said in a statement yesterday: "The interests of English rugby will be served by a strong professional club structure supporting over 500 professionals who will be available to England rather than a small elite group of players."

The national team is run by the RFU, which has just reached agreement with the other countries over the staging of the annual Five Nations' Championship following a separate dispute over the RFU's decision to sell its television rights to Sky. The RFU said last night that it was "disappointed that the players have been brought into this dispute", and stressed that it remained committed to finding an "equitable solution for all".

It revealed on Thursday that it was offering contracts of up to £70,000 to members of the



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A feast of Dover sole, Chablis and a politician lightly grilled

How a quiet briefing in a Blackpool
restaurant turned into a political storm

COLIN BROWN and
BARRY CLEMENT

The Seafood restaurant in Blackpool yesterday was enjoying the notoriety of becoming the latest in a series of venues where the main course has been a politician, lightly grilled.

The politician concerned, Stephen Byers, concerned the classic rules of etiquette for d'îôte with political journalists by eating the words attributed to him.

Mr Byers ruefully said he had learned two lessons from his dinner at the seaside restaurant with four lobby journalists.

"I have learned to be careful who I choose to have dinner with, and certainly not even express views about the developing relationship between the trade union movement and the Labour Party," he said.

The journalists shared the bill of £160.15p for a feast of crustaceans, mussels and Dover sole, washed down by a couple of bottles of Chablis. For the journalists the bill was worth it because they walked away from the table that night with a story which made the "splash" in three of the papers and a page two lead in the *Daily Mirror*.

Those present from the press were John Williams, political editor of the *Daily Mirror*; Roland Watson, chief political correspondent of the *Express*; Jill Sherman, chief political correspondent of *The Times* and Jon Hibbs, political correspondent of the *Telegraph*.

The conversation was typical of the anonymous briefings which take place during the conference season between politicians and journalists. It is part of the parliamentary lobby sys-

tem where kites are flown and hints dropped. Officially the sessions do not take place, the politicians were not there and even if they were, they did not say what they were supposed to have said. Reporters often add a touch of "top spin" to the stories, but it is rare for them simply to make it up, which is what Mr Byers seems to be saying in this case.

The evening began as was beyond the call of duty. Mr Williams and Mr Watson left the pub early – at half past during the Manchester United-Juventus match to be precise.

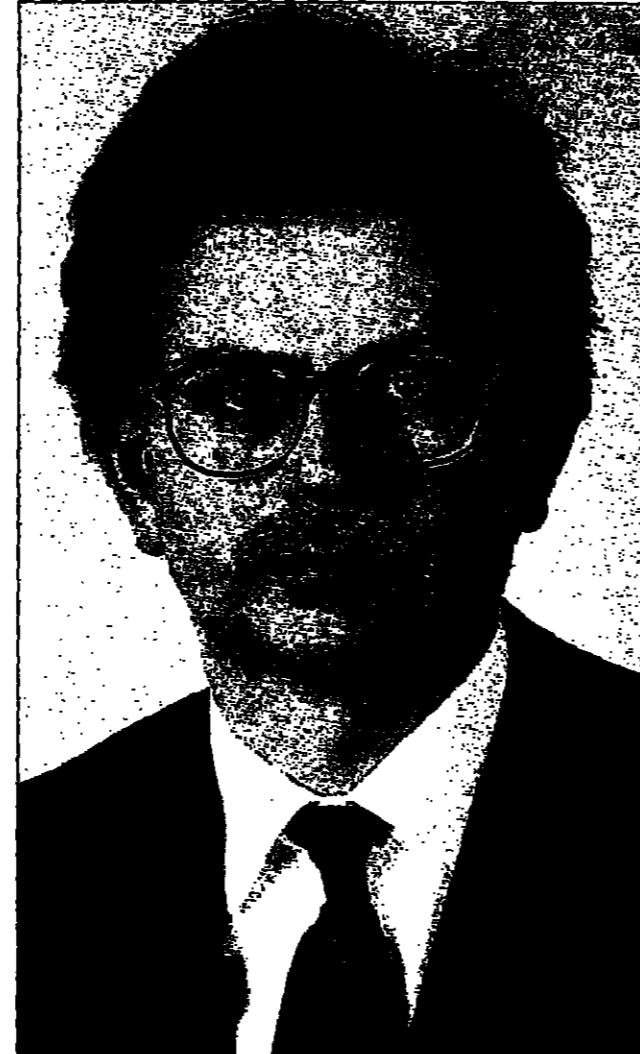
They caught a cab to the Seafood restaurant where they were joined by Mr Hibbs, Ms Sherman and Mr Byers.

At a nearby table in the 36-eater restaurant a contingent of BBC employees were blissfully unaware that their rivals were getting one of the biggest stories of the week. Such is journalism.

The Seafood will now have its name added to the long list of restaurants where politicians have been prepared to speak unguarded to journalists, providing it is off the record.

They include Luigi's, an Italian restaurant in Covent Garden, central London, where Neil Kinnock, then Labour leader, sprinkled over the pasta his thoughts about softening policy on abolishing the ceiling on National Insurance Contributions before the 1992 general election.

The disclosure infuriated John Smith, then Shadow Chancellor, and led to a round



Brief difficulty: Comments attributed to Stephen Byers (left) have embarrassed Labour's leader, Tony Blair



of traditional recanting. Mr Kinnock was proved right, and the Tories attacked Labour with the "tax bombshell" but by then it was too late.

La Mico, an Italian restaurant in Westminster, earned a footnote in history as the venue for Mr Kinnock's lunch with *The Independent's* lobby journalists, af-

ter which it was reported he was planning to dump Labour's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Granita in Islington, north London, has also gone into the history books as the upmarket setting for the dinner between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, when Mr Brown decided to pull

out of the Labour leadership contest.

Tory politicians have come unstuck over the hors-d'oeuvres. Paul Channon, the former transport minister, was embarrassed when he was found to be the source for speculation of early arrests in the Lockerbie bombing case, after lunch with

journalists at the Garrick Club in Soho.

Some ministers have grown so wary of the practice that they refuse to have lunch with journalists in packs. Peter Lilley, Secretary of State for Social Security, has a tip for Mr Byers. If he dines with journalists, he does it one at a time.

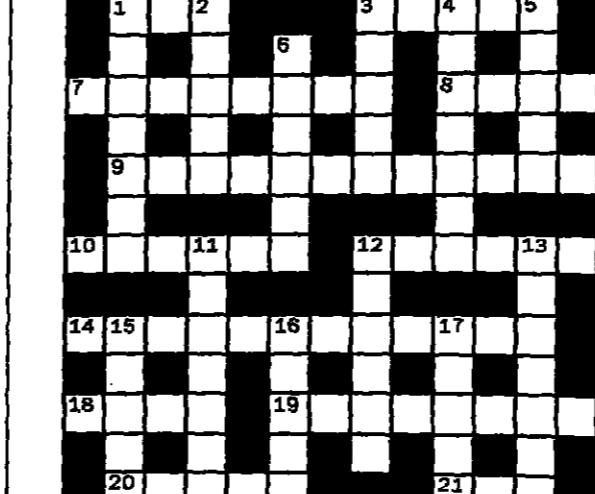
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NOON FORECAST



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ACROSS

- 1 Chinese cooking utensil
- 2 Strongly built (4-3)
- 3 Ponder (5)
- 7 Praise the Lord! (8)
- 8 Score of zero (4)
- 9 Modest (4-8)
- 10 Part of flower (6)
- 12 Connect (6)
- 14 Restrict within limits
- 18 Part of door-frame (4)
- 19 Insinuation (8)
- 20 50/50 chance (5)
- 21 Seaman (3)

Solutions to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Sicks, 4 Puns (Spurius), 8 Peckish, 9 Novel, 10 Noun, 11 Concerns, 12 Cabinet-makers, 15 Calendar, 17 Gear, 20 Ensuite, 21 Habitat, 22 Moon, 23 Riser. DOWN: 1 Succub, 2 Knit, 3 Schoolteacher, 4 Panacea, 5 Nevr, 6 Spin, 7 Closes, 12 Cachet, 13 Narken, 14 Elector, 16 Lasso, 18 Rate, 19 This.

Notes

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مكتبة من الأصل

The Prince's dilemma: Charles questions whether ever more people can be allowed to explore the natural environment

Is there such a thing as a green holiday?

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

The Prince of Wales has mounted a carefully considered attack on what is now the world's biggest industry - travel and tourism. In similar articles in the *International Herald Tribune* and a little known trade publication, *Green Hotelier*, he has condemned the destruction done to natural habitats and townscapes by mass tourism.

The Prince is concerned with the atrocious architecture of big hotels, the manifest lack of consideration for their surroundings, the energy and waste they waste. He wants old buildings such as redundant hospitals and mills to be converted into hotels instead of high-rise ones being built.

He says there is no need to look further than the edge of Hyde Park in London - as well as the river embankments of East European cities, the Mediterranean coastline and parts of Africa, Asia or Latin America - to see the results of "bad-mannered development". That is development without consideration for the history, cultural and local context of a place, the Prince says.

His thoughts raise the bigger question: "Is green tourism possible?"

Maybe. Go to a place which has already been despoiled by high rise, tacky hotels, such as Benidorm and enjoy a long out-of-season, holiday there. That may not be much fun, but you would at least get the benefit of rock-bottom prices. Thousands of British pensioners do it every year, enjoying weeks of mild if not warm weather while these islands are in the depths of winter.

What they do is "green" because they are making better use of facilities which have already been built and done the damage they are going to do. Far better to be there than in some unspoilt place. But to be truly green you would have to cross the sea by sailing boat and do the land part of the journey on foot or by bicycle.

Air travel, whose growth is absolutely linked with mass tourism's, is just about the most polluting form of transport there is, per capita per mile trav-

elled. The really damaging emissions are not those that cause smog, such as carbon monoxide, hydrocarbon and oxides of nitrogen, although jet engines produce them all.

What aero-engines produce in huge quantities is carbon dioxide, the principle cause of the man-made climate change which now appears to be getting under way.

For each person moved 100 kilometres, air travel is responsible for 550kg of carbon dioxide, on average. The comparable figure for the private car is just over 370kg and the figures for buses and trains are substantially lower. Only the taxi does worse than air, at about 700kg of carbon dioxide per passenger per 100 kilometres.

That means that the global warming pollution a family causes on one long-haul holiday to, say, Florida, is of roughly the same order as it produces in a year's use of the family car.

Latest figures from the Department of the Environment show that air travel is responsible for approximately 1m tons of carbon - a mere 1 per cent of Britain's total output. Much more comes from power stations, road transport, central heating systems and industry.

But the point about air transport is that it is the fastest growing transport sector of all, with a long-term growth trend of around 6 per cent per annum. There is no sign of the demand for air travel reaching a peak.

And that, of course, is why vast airport developments like Heathrow's Terminal Five are being planned the world over. The terminal, the subject of a long-running planning inquiry which is still under way, would have a major environmental impact over a large surrounding area, putting more traffic on the roads to start with.

John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, advocated a global tax on aviation fuel during international negotiations on combating climate change in Geneva this summer.

Airlines - and therefore air travellers - currently escape the heavy fuel duties imposed on road users.

The greenest possible holiday would be to go somewhere very



Rarer delight: Easier travel means fewer opportunities to escape from the crowds

Photograph: Network

close to home, using the bare minimum of the most environmentally friendly form of transport - bus or train.

That all sounds a bit hair-shirtish. It is laden with the kind of restraint and serious mindedness that can make being environmentally responsible seem dull and small minded. Are there some reasonable compromises for the couple or family which take the environment and holiday fun seriously?

A train and cycling holiday in Europe is one possibility. Using air travel to go on holiday every other year is another.

There is, however, one argument which may justify long-haul air journeys to the tropics. If wealthy westerners go there in large numbers to look at threatened habitats and wildlife, then that gives local communities

a strong incentive to preserve those natural areas.

The foreigners coming to see the rainforest, savannah

and coral reef bring much needed foreign currency with them.

They will only come in quantity if the wilderness is preserved in reasonably good shape and there are tolerable hotels, bars and restaurants.

But so far this incentive to

preserve nature does not appear to be working in most major wildlife and eco-tourism destinations: instead the onset of tourism seems to be just one further cause of despoliation.

Sooner or later the more affluent, discerning visitors come to see the place as spoilt, and they go somewhere else, and start spoiling that.

David Aaronovitch, page 17

How tourism destroys the world's beauty

Edited extracts from the article by the Prince of Wales in "Green Hotelier".

One of the benefits from the growing material prosperity of recent years has been the opportunity it has brought to many more people to travel ever more widely. But economic growth and increased tourism have brought with them the almost unstoppable seeds of destruction for the unspoilt parts of our world which drive the quest for travel in the first place.

For many places the process of legitimisation through insensitive development for mass tourism and the destruction of natural environments, townscapes and fragile ecosystems have demonstrated, vividly and tragically, the limits to sustainability.

There are a handful of sensitive developers, planners, architects and builders who recognise that an alternative and sustainable path to tourism development is the only guarantee of long-term profitability and of preserving the irreplaceable beauty of our environment for our descendants.

That is why I invited the International Hotels Environment Initiative, through its members, and through the pages of *Green Hotelier*, to address this issue.

We do not need to look further than the edge of Hyde Park in London, the river embankments of our finest East European cities, the beautiful Mediterranean coastline, or many more exotic places ... to see the results of bad-mannered development - development without consideration for the history, cultural and local

every reader can think of depressing examples of hotel buildings constructed purely for purposes of short-term economy ... Yet we can do so much better. There are inspiring examples of what can be achieved in places like the Egyptian desert through the use of experienced architects working with their clients on sensitive and affordable developments.

Hotels can be constructed cost effectively to enhance local culture and traditions, to preserve a "sense of place" and



Prince Charles: We can do so much better

to minimise disturbance of the environment ... Remarkable results can be achieved from converting existing buildings.

In my view there are no "free lunches" in this debate. Short-term profits are no more than that ... I believe all those with a long-term stake in their investments and the future of tourism, including banks which provide the capital, must each play a part in a bold drive to guarantee a more sustainable future for the way in which we spend our ever-increasing leisure time.

6 A great penumbra... a mysterious and shifting crowd of advisers and aides and spin doctors and sages, celebrities and plutocrats, artists and parasites and flatterers and plain hangers-on

The now-ESTABLISHMENT

On Monday Peter Popham begins a major series on the people jockeying for influence and status in the late Nineties as Tony Blair prepares himself for government



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THOUGH JACK DANIEL'S birthday is celebrated in September, the exact day and year remain a mystery.

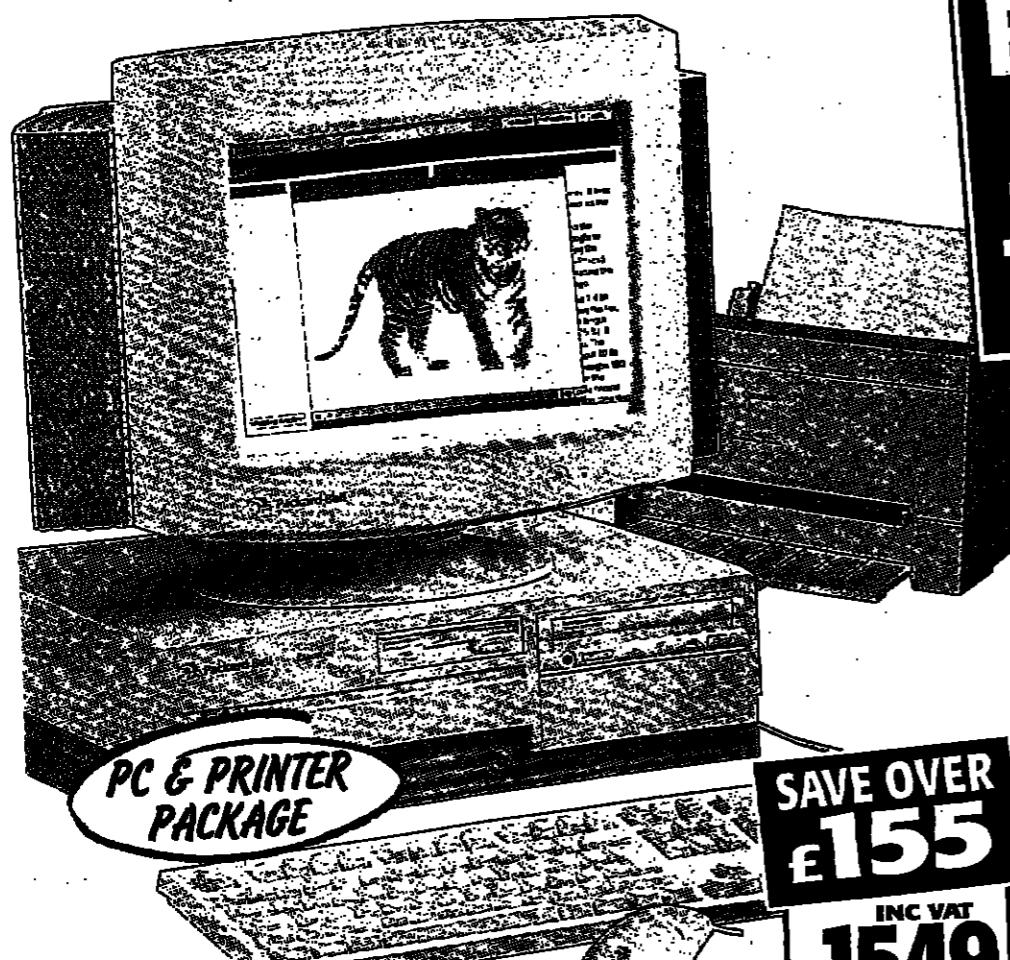
His statue at our distillery reads that he was born in 1850. Yet other sources state it was September of 1846. And as to which day, that may never be known. Still, all the confusion has never stopped anyone from celebrating Mr. Jack's birthday. The way we look at it, there's any one of 30 days to choose from.



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EU court threat to Britain's beef ban

In the latest twist in the beef crisis Britain is facing the threat of European court action over a ban on imports of cattle over 30-months-old. The ban is part of Britain's tactics to eradicate bovine spongiform encephalitis (BSE), but it has not been sanctioned by the rest of Europe.

Now the European Union Agriculture Commissioner, Franz Fischler, is preparing infringement proceedings against the United Kingdom and other countries who have taken unilateral trade action over BSE. Commission sources say that Britain's case is the most blatant breach of single-market rules.

The latest trouble with Brussels comes a few days before the Minister of Agriculture, Douglas Hogg, holds fresh talks with Mr Fischler over the selective cull of high-risk cattle due to start next month.

The incineration of British cattle over 30-months-old is a fundamental part of the Government's anti-BSE strategy. But Brussels says that does not give Britain the right to ban imports of cattle over 30 months from the rest of the EU. "We have a single market in which agreement has to be reached before such things can be done," a commission source said.

France, Spain and Germany have also taken trade measures against the rest of Europe. France has banned all imports of meat and bonemeal containing certain offal. Spain has banned all meat and bonemeal imports regardless of content. And in North Rhine-Westphalia there is a ban on imports of all British dairy produce.

A commission source warned that "a big package of infringe-

ment measures" could be expected. The first stage is a written warning to states accused of breaching EU law allowing them to justify their actions before Brussels begins legal proceedings.

A MAFF spokesman said: "We have had no formal notification that they are going to take proceedings against us. We brought these restrictions in as part of the controls to underline the fact that the British were taking the problem seriously."

The threat of a new dispute with Brussels in the beef crisis is unwelcome. Mr Hogg's hopes of slimming down the selective slaughter of 147,000 cattle – agreed by Mr Major at the Florence summit before the summer – are in any case poor.

"It is all going to be very difficult," a senior British official in Brussels said yesterday. "I would be surprised if any of them agreed to a cut in the cull."

Mr Hogg will hold private talks with Mr Fischler when the two men meet in Brussels on Monday at the start of a two-day meeting of EU agriculture ministers to assess the latest scientific evidence and review the impact so far of Britain's anti-BSE measures.

The commission has the fresh problem of finding sufficient cash to support the European beef market. Officials revealed yesterday that a maximum buy-up of unwanted EU beef of 400,000 tons by the end of this year is almost exhausted, and the European Parliament is refusing to sanction extra cash because the commission plans to make up the difference by reducing its £14bn-a-year subsidies to cereal growers by 7 per cent.

Pipe dream: The world's largest panpipes being played by composers Simon Desorgher (left) and Lawrence Casserley in rehearsal for the Colourscape Music Festival on Clapham Common, south London, this weekend and next weekend. Electric Tubes perform in the 100-room labyrinth on 22 September

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Expelled schoolboy wins legal aid to sue

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

A hyperactive seven-year-old boy has been given legal aid to bring a personal-injury claim against his local authority after he was thrown out of school for disruptive behaviour.

Andrew Eaton suffers from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and had thrown frequent tantrums. His reports said he hit and kicked other children, bit a teacher and threw ap-

paratus around the classroom. His school, Wellacre Infants in Flixton, Greater Manchester, excluded him in January after he refused to sign a behaviour contract. His parents said his first teacher could cope with him but after he moved up a class his problems escalated.

He now receives three hours of home tuition a week and his parents say he could suffer emotional and developmental damage from the experience. His parents were offered a

place for him at another school but they refused because it had a quiet, orderly atmosphere and they did not think Andrew could cope with it.

Andrew's father, Karl Eaton, said he supported his son's decision not to sign the contract, which asked him to try to keep the rules and said he might have to work in the corridor if he broke them. Andrew said he could not sit still because of his condition and did not see why he should show respect to the

teachers because he felt victimised by them.

"He said why should he show respect to adults when they didn't respect him. We weren't going to force a child of that age to sign something he did not want to," Mr Eaton said. Andrew had always been hyperactive. He and the boy's mother had 14 nights of uninterrupted sleep in his first three years of life, he added.

The family's solicitor, Mr Louis Wolton, said the case

could set a precedent. They had been granted legal aid to gather evidence and seek counsel's opinion and this could be extended if they wanted to continue with his case. "He is a very active child and since he was excluded he has become very depressive. He isn't the same child as he was. We feel this may have long-term psychological effects on the child."

Tony Lee, director of education for Trafford, where the Eatons live, said their appeal for

a place at a different school for Andrew was being heard on Thursday and he had been advised not to comment till then.

Thirty children were kept away from Manton Junior School in Worksop, Nottinghamshire, in protest at individual lessons being given to Matthew Wilson, 10. Teachers had threatened to strike if he was not removed from their lessons because they said he was disruptive but the school governors refused to exclude him.

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news

Waste accusation: High-tech signalling centre built five years ago faces demolition because authorities say it is redundant



Bypassed: The old signal box and the never-used £3m control centre at Gillingham, Kent, made redundant by a reorganisation at Railtrack

It cost £3m of public cash. Now Railtrack is to knock it down

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

A £3m signalling centre built five years ago and never used may have to be demolished because a change in policy by Railtrack has made it redundant.

The grey metal building next to the station in Gillingham, Kent, was to have been one of a network of "integrated electronic control centres", a new type of signal box which involved staff sitting at visual display units rather than having to look at a large display board.

Until recently, the centre was planned to be one of up to around half a dozen controlling trains in Kent and south-east London. Now Railtrack has decided to use the existing accommodation at Ashford, in Kent, for the centre.

The waste of assets built at public expense by newly privatised Railtrack will enrage critics of the privatisation process and will be a major embarrassment to the company.

Visiting the site, *The Independent* found a sign in an empty car park saying visitors should "dial 2348". The woman who answered said some staff had been taken on whether they are going to use it."

However, *The Independent* has been told by a senior railway source that the decision not to make use of the control centre has been made and Railtrack property board is desperately trying to find a tenant. "As it's purpose built, it is unlikely they will find anyone and they have said that it will then be demolished.

The decision not to use the centre was taken for both technical and logistical reasons. Part of the problem is that the specialised technology which was to have been used in the building has now been dropped in favour of a more modern computer application which takes up less room and can therefore be undertaken from other control centres.

The control centre was sealed when Railtrack decided recently to merge its south and south-west zones into a new southern zone, covering British Rail's old Southern Region. This merged the Gillingham signalling area with the zone covered by Ashford, making it logical and cheaper for it to be controlled from one point.

A spokeswoman for Railtrack said that a final decision had yet to be taken, but that options were being considered "because the technology has moved on and Gillingham is no longer necessarily the best place to have a control centre". She confirmed that the two zones made it unnecessary to have two centres.

Glenda Jackson, Labour's transport spokeswoman, said: "Every day we get examples of taxpayers' money being wasted rather than being spent on investment in the rail network."

Muscle power: A railwayman pulling levers to operate track signals the old-fashioned way in 1956

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index

Opera heroine courts trouble with trousers

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

The question on everyone's lips was whether he had pushed the boundaries too far. Jonathan Miller opened his new production of *La Traviata* at the English National Opera on Thursday with an unusual twist - a heroine in trousers.

The opera's first act is set in glittering 1850s Paris, where the courtesan Violetta, doomed to die of consumption in her lover's arms, traditionally wears an evening gown as she hosts a supper party for friends.

But Dr Miller, with his customary element of surprise, decided that Violetta should wear black trousers and a waistcoat. It was a decision which divided the audience and dominated the opera.

David Gillard, reviewing the production which opened ENO's new season for the *Daily Mail*, observed: "In Jonathan Miller's uncharacteristically dreary new production of Verdi's great romance it is Violetta... who wears the trousers - literally."

Graeme Kay, editor of *Opera Now*, said the move appeared to evoke the bohemian chic of the female novelist George Sand, who had an affair with Chopin. "The suggestion may be that Violetta was rather more intellectual than people might have supposed of a courtesan."

The other female guest in Act I were dressed in the crinolines and off-the-shoulder ball-gowns of the era, as Verdi intended. He wrote the opera when a vogue of realism was emerging and wanted the production to be in dress of the day.

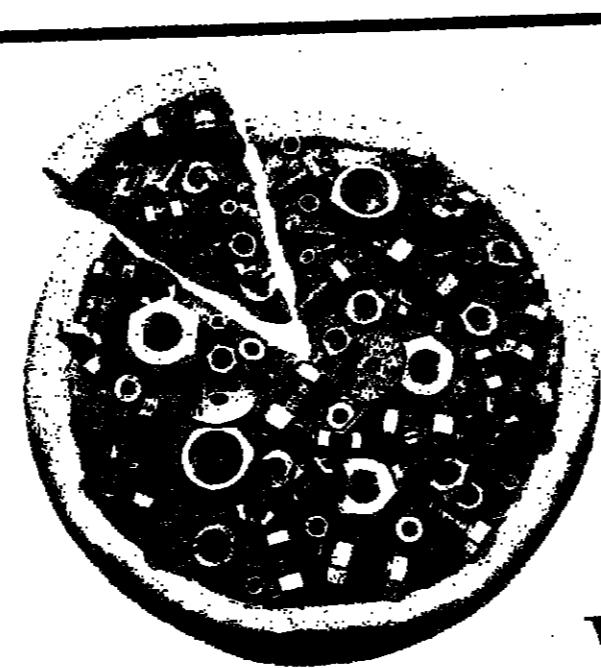
How the critics took to *La Traviata*
David Gillard, in the *Daily Mail*: "In Jonathan Miller's uncharacteristically dreary new production of Verdi's great romance it is Violetta, the sumptuous Lady of the Camellias, who wears the trousers - literally."

Edward Seckerson, for *The Independent*: "For a moment or two, Miller wrong-footed you with a flesh of sexual ambiguity. Violetta is the one in the tight black pants and waistcoat, sensuously decadent."

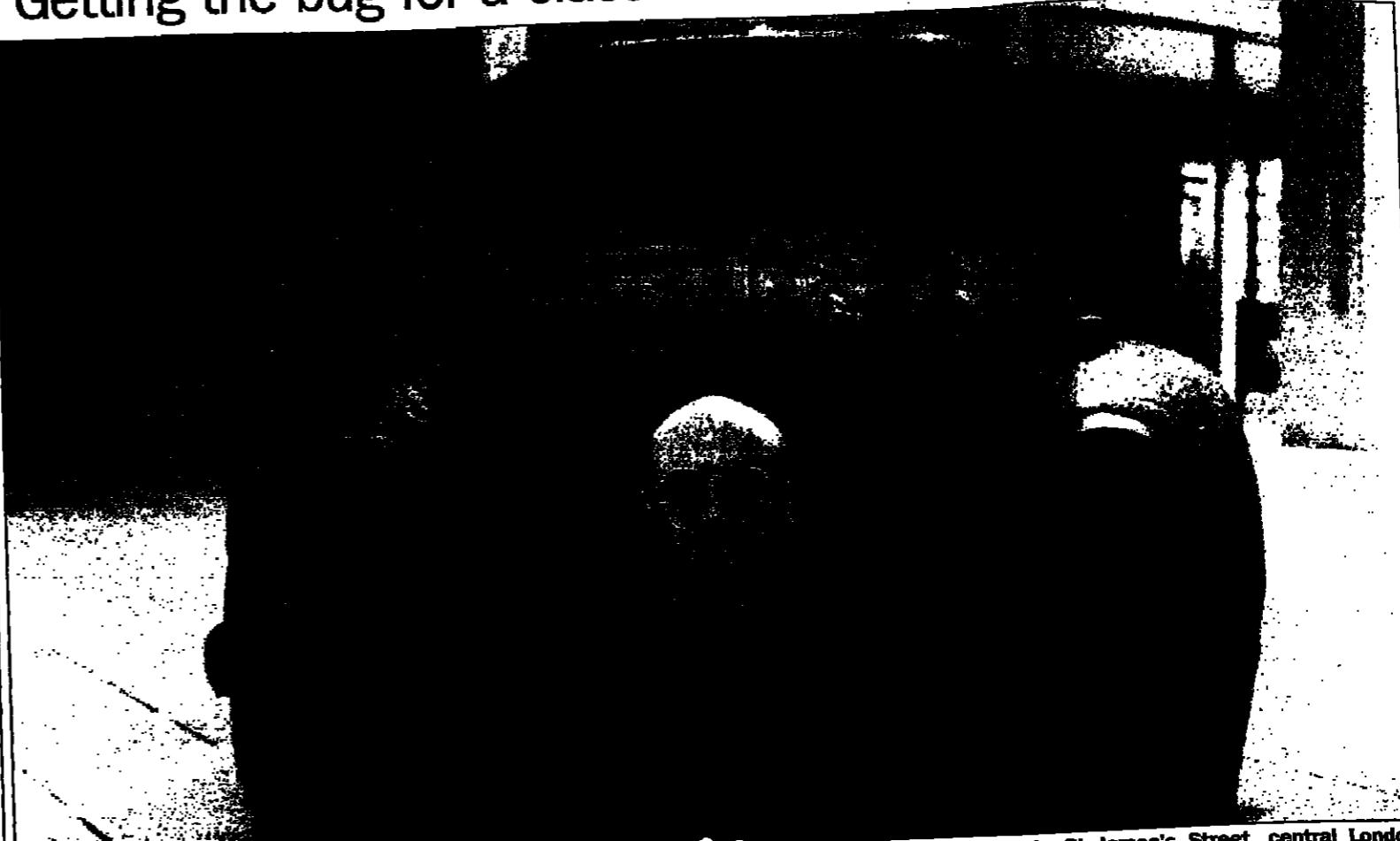
Dr Miller flew out of Britain yesterday, but Clare Mitchell, the costume designer, said he had been convinced from the first that Violetta - sung by Ross Manison - should wear trousers. The soprano initially had doubts but was won over after several fittings and one trouser-suit had been discarded. Ms Mitchell explained: "One of the main reasons for it was to give her some freedom of movement. It was very much the idea of freedom of spirit. That is what Violetta was at first: this very free person."

In the second act it was decided that Violetta should wear a flowing white dress and in the third act she is confined to bed in a nightgown.

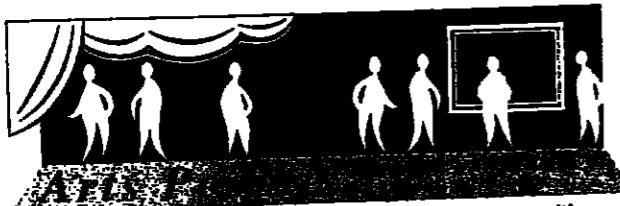
Ms Mitchell said another motive for putting Violetta in trousers was to signify that she was a free-thinker and a rebel. "There was a very strong feeling that she would wear what she felt comfortable in." She added that it was not distorting history to dress her in men's clothing. Bohemian women of the period did wear trousers.



Getting the bug for a classic car can be a sticky business



Artist Donald Hyams posing with his *Urban Fossil* (VW) for its unveiling at the Economist Plaza in St James's Street, central London, yesterday. The 1965 Beetle, covered in asphalt, remains on show until 21 September. Photograph: Andrew Buurman



"Twenty thousand air guitarists are going to be unable to play 'Layla' this winter. I learn that Eric Clapton is not going to take up his residency at the Royal Albert Hall, as he has done faithfully for the past 10 years. The thought of the RAH, a cold February night and no blues rock from the white-suited, bearded chap has come as a nasty shock to Clapton fans, both individual and corporate, who normally start booking their boxes now and have been haranguing the RAH."



management. Clapton is forsaking the residency next year to make an album. "He is feeling very creative," said a spokesman.

Another bunch of creatives, also resident at the Royal Albert Hall, will certainly not be deserting their Alma Mater. The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, now the Hall's resident orchestra, celebrates

DAVID LISTER

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Sultan's dream restored to faithful

Syria is confident of reviving the pilgrims' railway from Damascus to holy cities, writes Robert Fisk

Damascus — The Hijaz railway station was a brief dream, the last, short fantasy of the Ottoman empire, the final vision of the Sultan Abdul Hamid to send his Muslim pilgrims from Damascus on the best train Western technology had to offer. From their terminus in Syria — all cut-stone porticos and painted-wooden roof, the booking halls hanging with brass lanterns — the great German steam locos of the 19th century would haul the faithful through a land without frontiers

tearing up the rails and blowing up the fine, wooden-carriaged trains. In what is now Saudi Arabia, it is difficult to identify the old permanent way in Jordan, a new industrial line has replaced the route to Jebel Dabbagh. And outside the Hijaz station in Damascus, where the brass train bell still hangs above the narrow-gauge metals, a single Hungarian-made railbus, its Communist-era windows covered in fingerprints, waits to trundle the few miles down to Deraa, the grubby marshalling yard in which Lawrence met his personal nemesis at the hands of a Turkish officer. Railways often take longer to die than empires.

Mount the gilded staircase of the Hijaz station, however, and you will find Engineer Salah Ahmed, director of the Hijaz railway — a gold-painted busi of President Hafez el-Assad of Syria to his right, a history of Syrian state railways in front of him — ready to give proof of reincarnation. Of Syria's 17 German and Swiss 19th-century steam locos, seven have been restored in the past two years and are fully operational. Four of five Romanian diesels are now working again, and two of the six Hungarian railcars. "We have even renovated the personal carriage of the Sultan Abdul Hamid," says the moustachioed director.

And when I bound back down the stairs, there it is, with a Swiss loco in green and red livery coupled to the carriage and a second car — ignominiously labelled "Bar", but of equal vintage — tacked on behind. In their enthusiasm to



Return to grandeur: Hijaz station in Damascus; Sultan Abdul Hamid's restored locomotive (right); and (above right) its extemporised nameplate

gloss this most exotic of trains, the Syrians have painted on to its flanks the names of the cities through which the equally famous Orient Express once travelled on its way to northern Syria. "Paris, Vien, Beograd — Alep ..." But the Sultan's carriage still contains a private bathroom and the Winterthur locomotive, all iron and brass, has its nameplate and number to show that it once climbed the great pass from Damascus to Beirut. It waits for tourists. On the next track, the Hungarian railbus symbolises reality.

Engineer Ahmed has co-authored the history of Syrian railways and he reels off the dates

of the epic Hijaz completion with the enthusiasm of a sergeant major, as if he had overseen its construction. "Damascus-Deraa was completed in 1903. Damascus-Haifa the same year. Saleh-Medina was in 1908. The Sultan Abdul Hamid wanted to help Muslim pilgrims to travel to Mecca safely instead of riding on horse and camel through the desert with the danger of thieves and disease. Half the money was raised by public subscription. This station here in Damascus was finished in 1914." Not a hint of irony enters his voice as that fatal year — *alp wa tis-mille arba-tash* in Arabic — echoes

across his magnificent office, the year of Sarajevo and Mons and the final, fatal commitment of the Ottomans to the Central Powers. The Arab Revolt was less than two years away. So was the end of the Hijaz railway.

But you have to admire the

efforts of Engineer Ahmed's 600 railwaymen to resurrect their end of the line. Over the past three years, they have not only restored the locos — "with only Syrian expertise, no foreigners, and we can now make any working part in our sheds", the director insists — but renovated the old railway line from Deraa to Bosra, from Damascus to Qatana and to Bloudan. Every

Friday, another Winterthur tank engine, blowing its whistle amid clouds of brown smoke, can be seen hustling its carriages over the motorway behind the Sheraton Hotel en route to the mountains along the Lebanese border. The reconditioned terminus is a masterpiece of art, its façade now decorated with a massive portrait of the man who will always make the trains run on time, President Assad.

To the north, Syria boasts a new track to Aleppo and a Romanian-built railway of stunning viaducts and Stakhanovite tunnels to Lattakia. But it is the Hijaz that has captured the emotions of Syrian train-lovers,

along with its palace of a station where the pigeons swoop below the painted rafters and the great Turkish candelabra. Every Syrian museum has its archival pictures of the terminus. In some, it reflects the late autumnal heat of 1915, robed merchants and servants talking in the concourse. Others show British and Australian cavalry riding past the station in the flush of General Allenby's victory. No train would ever again leave for Medina. Lawrence, along with the cancerous frontiers drawn by the British and the French would see to that.

And yet Syrians are returning to their trains — at an aver-

age ticket cost of £2 for every 160km covered, the advantages are hard to conceal — and Engineer Ahmed sees no technical reason why the Hijaz should not be restored in its entirety through modern-day Jordan — which maintains the track to Amman — and deep into Saudi Arabia: there have been two abortive efforts to do just that in the past half century. "We are hoping this will come to pass," he says. "We have done a lot of work at our end, without any foreign help. We have done our share. Now we are waiting for the others to do theirs."

This is the last in our summer series on railway journeys.

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And yet Syrians are returning to their trains — at an aver-



Photographs: Robert Fisk

RIDING THE IRON ROAD

to the holy cities of Arabia. Even today, above the booking windows, you can read the words in carved wood: "In the name of God, the Most Merciful."

He did not cast his most benevolent light upon the fruits of Sultan Abdul Hamid's imagination. In little more than a decade, the Turks were using the 1,000-km track to ferry their troops into the peninsula and TE Lawrence's warriors were

making pointless purchases"



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Pandemonium on the Po in Padania

ANNE HANLEY
Rome

The leader of the Northern League, Umberto Bossi, began his three-day secession pilgrimage yesterday afternoon, taking a phial of water from the source of the River Po. Mr Bossi will take the phial with him down-river to Venice where he will declare the independence of Padania tomorrow.

The League is hoping — rather ambitiously — for crowds of several million at celebrations at dozens of points along the river this weekend. Citizens of the new "republic" will be asked to burn television licences to symbolise their break with Rome.

Some people made their way up the tortuous mountain road to Piandemiche where the Po bubbles out of the side of Monte Viso on Friday afternoon to see Mr Bossi siphoning off the symbolic liquid.

There was pandemonium as cars flying league flags and hooting wound their way over freshly painted road markings reading "Long live Padania" and "Bossi is God". On each car aerial was a pink rose — traditionally hung on Italian front doors to announce the birth of a girl.

At Crissolo, where vehicles were stopped and the road barred, Mr Bossi's followers were in festive mood as they paid out 8,000 lire — hard-currency Italian ones, not the Padanian ones already in circulation — to be ferried uphill for the fateful rally.

Hotel keepers, under assault from hundreds of journalists from all over the globe, were not so jolly, watching rugby scrums forming around the few available telephones.

In preparation for the Big Three Days, Mr Bossi on Thursday evening got around to expelling the one-time league sweetheart, Irene Pivetti, from the party. Ms Pivetti, a former speaker of the Lower House, was ejected from the once-federal party for questioning the secessionist line which Mr Bossi

has imposed over the summer.

With excitement growing in Padania-to-be, staid political powers in Rome showed growing nervousness at the thought of what the Padanian weekend might hold. "Unity" was on everyone's lips there, not to mention in Switzerland where Italy's president, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, wound up his three-day official visit yesterday.

Mr Scalfaro went out of his way to praise Switzerland's centuries-old federation, lauding it as a possible model for an Italy of the future.

Mr Bossi, with the secessionist wind firmly in his sails, has other ideas, however. Tomorrow's declaration, he maintains, will put Italy's wealthy and

Some people made their way up the tortuous mountain road to Piandemiche where the Po bubbles out of the side of Monte Viso on Friday afternoon to see Mr Bossi siphoning off the symbolic liquid.

There was pandemonium as cars flying league flags and hooting wound their way over freshly painted road markings reading "Long live Padania" and "Bossi is God". On each car aerial was a pink rose — traditionally hung on Italian front doors to announce the birth of a girl.

At Crissolo, where vehicles were stopped and the road barred, Mr Bossi's followers were in festive mood as they paid out 8,000 lire — hard-currency Italian ones, not the Padanian ones already in circulation — to be ferried uphill for the fateful rally.

Hotel keepers, under assault from hundreds of journalists from all over the globe, were not so jolly, watching rugby scrums forming around the few available telephones.

In preparation for the Big Three Days, Mr Bossi on Thursday evening got around to expelling the one-time league sweetheart, Irene Pivetti, from the party. Ms Pivetti, a former speaker of the Lower House, was ejected from the once-federal party for questioning the secessionist line which Mr Bossi

has imposed over the summer.

The Afghan government confirmed the fall of the eastern province of Laghman to the rebel Taliban Islamic militia, which said it had seized the adjoining Kunar province as well. There were conflicting reports about the situation in Kunar, which borders Pakistan. A Taliban source in Peshawar said the province had come under the control of the militia, which has pushed east in the past week to take greater control of strategic provinces. But other Afghan sources denied this report and said peace negotiations were going on between the Taliban and the pro-government Kunar administration. *Reuter - Kabul*

President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire is likely to remain in Switzerland at least two more weeks for further medical treatment, a Swiss official said. His stay, which already has lasted a month, is provoking concern in Zaire about the future of the country. A spokesman for the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs said there was nothing unusual in Mr Mobutu's situation. "He seems to be recovering normally. He is in a hotel in Lausanne and is visiting the hospital regularly as an outpatient for analysis." *AP - Berne*

Yugoslavia expects the last strand of international sanctions to be lifted on 24 September, 10 days after Bosnian elections, the Yugoslav Trade Minister, Djordje Siradovic, said. "Yugoslavia considers that to be absolutely the moment for the definitive removal of sanctions, since it has done everything in its power to implement the Dayton and Paris [peace] accords." *Reuter - Belgrade*

Animal saliva, urine and embalming fluids are some of the ingredients Bangkok health inspectors found in food sold on city streets. Bangkok is crammed with stalls where office workers and some tourists frequently eat at roadside restaurants. But a study by the World Health Organization and the Department of Health found the street fare a smorgasbord of health hazards. *AP - Bangkok*

A hacker, taking advantage of a weakness in the Internet, has driven an access company to its knees in an attack that computer security experts say is one of the longest yet seen. The attack has prevented Public Access Networks, the first company to provide Internet connections to New York City residents, from connecting customers to the network for a week. Thousands of people and dozens of companies have been affected. *AP - New York*

Sales abroad of tequila have boomed so far this year, helping to push production of the powerful agave liquor to record levels that could reach 80 million litres, an industry official said. "Tequila exports have grown 13.7 per cent in the January-August period in 1996 compared with the same period in 1995," Ramon Gonzalez, head of the Tequila Regulatory Board, said. *Reuter - Guadalajara*

A parrot's owner won \$12,300 (£6,300) in damages after a court ruled that a vet endangered its "possible stud career". New South Wales district court judge Terence Christie said payment should include \$2,500 for "stress and inconvenience" to Nelson the macaw's owner, Roger Schlip, who accused Ross Perry of negligently breaking its leg while treating the animal. Mr Schlip said a macaw's mating ritual was complex and strenuous, involving "considerable force", an action made impossible now for Nelson because of his broken leg. *Reuter - Sydney*

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

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Bosnia ballots with bullets on its mind

As the polling-stations open, there is little evidence that democracy is going to take hold, writes Andrew Gumbel

Bugojno - A few weeks ago, a Croat, Nine Pocnja, returned to his home town here in central Bosnia to try to rebuild his life. Within a few days of moving back into his house, gangs of Muslims, now the dominant group in the town, warned him that if he did not get out they would shoot him.

He refused, so the gangs ripped the doors off his house. Everywhere he went in Bugojno he was spat at. Still he would not budge, so they took out the bathtub, sink and toilet. A few days ago, as final preparations were being made for today's elections, he finally left.

In the village of Lug, a few miles away, the gangs prefer to wait until the Croats have put the roofs back on their houses, rewired the interior and started installing the kitchen. They then pull the wiring out, rip up the floorboards and smash or steal everything else, leaving their names smeared on the walls in soot as a sinister signature. Sometimes they don't expend so much energy and simply lob a bomb into the house.

Not only are the local police not bothered by such acts, they seem actively to condone them. When Ruzica Pavlović, 60, a disabled Croat from Lug, complained about the destruction of her house, she was beaten up.

Such stories are familiar in central Bosnia, frontline of a Muslim-Croat war in 1993 and 1994 and now the heartland of

what is supposed to be a Muslim-Croat federation.

In Bugojno, the violence is by Muslims against Croats but in many other towns in the region the boot is on the other foot. Near Vitez, a truck driver on his way into the Muslim-dominated old town broke down in the surrounding Croat-controlled territory. By the time he found help, his truck had been set on fire. Other Muslim drivers have been stoned or stopped by Croat police and fined for no reason.

The prospects for real co-existence as envisaged under the Dayton treaty seem dim. The Serbs have set up a mini-republic behind an inter-ethnic border and the Croats have tried to do the same, running their own, territorially patchy show called Herceg-Bosna and having as little as possible to do with the Muslims.

Some parts of federation territory, such as the Muslim-controlled Bihać pocket in the north-west or the Croat-dominated south-west, are ethnically "pure" enough for rival groups to ignore each other. But in central Bosnia, Muslims and Croats have been thrown together, partly because the area has always been mixed, and partly because at the beginning of the war it filled up with refugees from both groups being attacked by the Serbs.

If Bosnia is to have any chance of stabilising, political

leaders of the two groups have to get along, and they know it. The Croats, under international pressure, agreed to dismantle Herceg-Bosna this month while Muslim authorities have become more tolerant of rallies on their territory by the Croat nationalist HDZ party.

Overall, the federation has

progressed much like the Dayton peace process: successfully on military issues but disastrously on matters such as human rights and the return of refugees. Within two days of the "abolition" of Herceg-Bosna, top brass from the Bosnian Croat army, the HVO, were invited to meet Muslim officers

to discuss integrating their forces. Both have an interest in merging, since that is the condition for receiving a US military aid package. Equip and Train. "Equip and Train to have blood up to our knees," was the comment of Father Janko, the Franciscan priest and Croat community leader in Bugojno.

In all other respects, the federation is a fiction. In mixed towns across central Bosnia like Novi Travnik, Gornji Vakuf and Vitez, communities have split into halves, with the wartime frontline acting as an invisible Berlin Wall-like barrier. The few members of the "wrong" ethnic group who have

stayed on their pre-war side of the line are rapidly evicted. There is no immediate prospect of seized property being returned to its rightful owners or compensated for.

In these split towns there are two mayors, two town councils, two currencies, two sets of number-plates, even two tele-



Poll position: Supporters of the Muslim-led Bosnian Party of Democratic Action rallying in Sarajevo's Kosevo stadium

Electoral maze sets a record for complexity

EMMA DALY
Sarajevo

The most complicated and chaotic election in modern European history takes place today, when Bosnians go to the post-war polls to elect a three-man national presidency, several parliamentary assemblies and a handful of cantonal governments. There are 2.9 million eligible voters and 55 parties are fielding candidates - but there is no real competition, for the vast majority of Serbs, Croats and Muslims are expected to vote along ethnic lines for the ruling party of each group.

The most important race is the election to the presidency, which will include one Serb, one Croat and one Muslim.

Momcilo Krajisnik, right-hand man of the indicted war criminal Radovan Karadžić, is the undoubtedly choice of Serbs, who seek eternal partition and ethnic purity. Aljaž Izetbegović, Bosnia's wartime president, is the man for most Muslims, while Krešimir Zubak is the

Croats' candidate. Of the three, it seems likely that Mr Krajisnik, who has been steadfast in his determination to destroy Bosnia, will assume the chairmanship of the presidency.

This is because the Dayton peace plan prescribes that the post should go to the candidate who wins the most votes.

There are 1.35 million Muslim voters registered, compared with 1.1 million Serbs and 530,000 Croats, but Mr Izetbegović is not expected to be able to pick up the entire Muslim vote. People are voting in either the Muslim-Croat federation or Republika Srpska, the entities which make up the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Voters in both must elect the three-man presidency and members of a Bosnian assembly. At the same time, voters in the federation and in the Serb region are choosing members for their own assemblies.

As if this was not complex enough, there are 850,000 voters displaced by war who no longer live where they did in

1991. They have the right to cast ballots, across the confrontation line, in the area they fled. Serb refugees have not only been discouraged but actively barred from exercising this right by their own leadership, which wants no Serb involvement in the federation.

But tens of thousands of

Muslims, expelled from their homes, are planning to cross the line - physically or on paper - to vote, in an attempt to thwart Serb plans for partition and in the hope that they might one day go home.

The architects of the Dayton peace deal (the Americans, supported by Russia and Europe), portrayed the poll as the saviour of a united multi-ethnic Bosnia, but it looks more likely to hasten final divisions. Mr Krajisnik's party is planning to call a referendum to break up Bosnia, while Mr Izetbegović assures refugees they will go home. Such positions are not only contradictory but will, if maintained, lead almost inevitably to a new war.

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Triumph for EMU: Klaus Kinkel, Foreign Minister, with Helmut Kohl after parliament approved the cuts package

Photograph: Reuters



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Kohl's victory on cuts clears way for EMU

IMRE KARACS
Bonn

The odds on European Monetary Union arriving on schedule shortened significantly yesterday as the German government's controversial austerity programme cleared its final parliamentary hurdle.

With DM70bn (£30bn) lopped off next year's budget at a stroke, Germany is within sight of the target laid down by the Maastricht treaty. Member states wishing to join the first wave of EMU in 1999 must keep their budget deficit below 3 per cent of GDP next year, and limit their public indebtedness to 60 per cent of GDP.

Without the cuts proposed by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Germany would have disqualified

itself from EMU, ending the entire project, as ministers pointed out to wavers during the debate. "This is an important decision day for Germany. The eyes of the world are upon us," Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister, told MPs.

In the end, the package went through with four votes to spare, but the government whips left nothing to chance, mobilising all their able-bodied MPs as well as the infirm.

Michael Glos, a senior Christian Socialist who had recently undergone a stomach operation, was flown in from Bavaria by helicopter, flanked by a doctor and a nurse. Jochen Borchert, the Agriculture Minister, who is recovering from spine surgery, was also in attendance.

The relief on the government benches when the result was announced was palpable. Mr Kohl slapped his thighs in delight and ministers of the three coalition parties leapt off their seats to congratulate one another.

On the other side of the house, there was only bitterness and forlorn demands for the government's resignation. The trade unions, whose stall near the parliament building had been bombarding the politicians with combative slogans through a booming public address system, appeared disheartened. "This is Black Friday for the welfare state," one union official lamented.

Oskar Lafontaine, leader of the opposition Social Democrats, said: "The policies of social injustice will merely raise unemployment and public deficits. Resistance will grow."

There was, however, little evidence of unrest in the streets. The strikes staged by the unions since early summer have fizzled out and the mass rallies are

becoming less massive by the week. After the vote yesterday, only five people were consuming the free beer at the union stall.

The government programme aims to slash welfare spending and stimulate the sagging economy. Sick pay, which at present amounts to 100 per cent of average wages, will be cut to 80 per cent. The dole is being cut, as well as funds for job-creation programmes.

The retirement age for women is to be raised over the coming years from 60 to 65 and men's from 63 to 65. The most contentious part of the package is the most savage blow to workers' rights since the Second World War. Workers of enterprises employing fewer than 10 people will no longer be protected from dismissal. The unions say this opens the way to rampant capitalism of the Anglo-Saxon kind, heralding the age of the "McJobs", and the end of the post-war consensus on the welfare state.

"I have here a picture of a man confined to a wheelchair," Rudolf Scharping, the Social Democrats' economic spokesman, said. "He works despite his limitations. And now you are throwing him into a social welfare net – one which you claim contains only lazy people and shirkers."

But economists, industry and even large sections of the population support the government view that Germany's public spending must be slimmed down. The country is slowly emerging from a recession with no new jobs in sight. Unemployment, at a post-war record of 4 million, is set to stay, but the opposition has failed to convince the voters that it has better ideas for putting Germany to work again.

Western experts to help Yeltsin doctors

MOSCOW (Reuters) — The Kremlin is bringing in leading Western heart specialists to advise Russian doctors preparing for President Boris Yeltsin's bypass operation.

The presidential press office said in a statement yesterday that two German cardiologists — offered by Chancellor Helmut Kohl — would join the Russian team of experts.

The German government named the two as Axel Haverich, director of a clinic for heart surgery at Hanover's Medical Technical College, and Thorsten Wahlers, who also worked there.

The Russian media said on Thursday that the pioneering American heart surgeon, Michael DeBakey, would join the team. DeBakey, of Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, said he had not been approached, but would be happy to help if asked to do so.

The specialists will decide in

around two weeks when to operate on Mr Yeltsin, who was re-elected for a second four-year term in July.

Doctors have said he needs a relatively simple bypass, in which a vein or artery is removed from one part of the body and grafted into the heart area to improve the flow of blood.

Mr Yeltsin, 65, had two heart attacks last year. He broke a long Kremlin tradition of secrecy on medical issues early this month when he said he would have an operation.

Mr DeBakey, 88, is perhaps the world's most famous heart surgeon and a pioneer in the development of the artificial heart.

Rinat Akchurin has been touted as the Russian surgeon most likely to do Mr Yeltsin's operation. In 1992, he performed a bypass on the Prime Minister, Victor Chernomyrdin, and trained with Mr DeBakey.

Cyclists ride to war on the green line

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

The belated introduction of cycle lanes in Paris looked like a good idea at the time. Who could be against it, except the most pig-headed of the city's motorists?

In February, when announced, it answered a host of needs. A summer and autumn of high pollution had discouraged local authorities into thinking something had to be done. Cycle lanes were a cheap, quick and simple response. The strikes of November and December brought gridlock to Paris and forced people, eventually, to take to their bikes.

Finally, Mayor Jean Tiberi needed a distraction from accusations about his children and their cut-price council flats.

A "green plan", starting with cycle lanes, was a media-friendly idea.

Seven months later, the first lanes have appeared, 25 km of them, marked in green and white, with drawings of bicycles so there can be no mistake. There are street signs, too, indicating where the lanes begin.

The size of the lanes, and the fact that they are often shared with buses and taxis, make for

the first problem. The cyclists don't feel especially safe. The second problem is bus drivers who see the bollards at the beginning of the cycle lane after traffic lights as an intrusion into their space; their progress is slowed and they do not feel like being generous to the cyclists thereafter.

The biggest problem from the cyclists' point of view, however, is that the signs announcing the cycle lanes are "obligatory", not "recommending". This, one cyclists' organisation has said, was not mentioned when the plan for lanes was discussed; and it means a cyclist who ranges outside the lane is committing an offence.

Cyclists now complain of being stopped when they range outside "their" lane. They face a 400-franc (£50) fine, and perhaps a check of their bike: a bell that does not work will cost another F300. Surely, said one, Paris police have better things to do than patrol cycle lanes.

So far, there is no resolution. But the first road markings are starting to fade, and the number of cyclists using the lanes is negligible. Meanwhile, another 25km is supposed to be completed by the end of the year.

Weekend

The Independent

A night of hope and glory? In the Hall, at home or in the park, page 3



BOOKS



5 Atwood, a tale of sex, class, murder and madness

'Alias Grace' is a first for Margaret Atwood. One of our richest imaginers has written a novel based on a real historical case. But what a case!

OUTINGS



13 Welcome to Segaworld, virtual theme park

I spent (too) much of Monday evening in an inverse position, zapping aliens while I dangled from the R360. Too late I realised that 360 is the number of degrees you pass through

TRAVEL



18 New England in the fall leaves nothing to the imagination

It is as if someone has taken a match to the drying leaves and the whole countryside has burst into flame and the trees don't shed until they have put on a dazzling display.

RISING DAMP?

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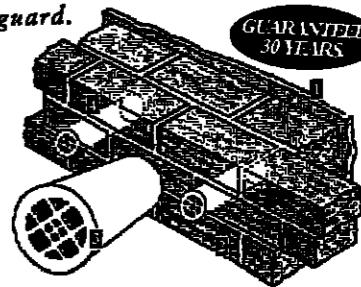
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Art is quite as efficient at virtual reality as any computer, and as seductive as advertising

One of the reports issuing from the British Association for the Advancement of Science this week announced that computer games can be stress-relieving. For all I know this study may have been subsidised by the Nintendo Institute of Social Sciences but, finding myself at a loose end I went off to Segaworld - a new multi-level computer theme park in central London - for a few hours of tension-relieving fantasy, blasting jump-suited zombies into puddles of gore and hammering rally cars round virtual race-tracks.

I don't think they sell Valium in the Sega Store, the exit-straddling money-vacuum which is designed to suck the last few coins out of visitors' pockets, but they should think about it. Because the idea that computer games are de-stressing is not exactly borne out by this cacophonous labyrinth, yelping and shrieking with simulated damage and

alarm. Nor are the signs warning that it is inadvisable to combine high blood pressure, epilepsy or pregnancy with some of the attractions. You leave Segaworld your blood fizzing with adrenalin and corticotrophin, a ruck of chemical messengers marshalling the organs to battle, calling up sugar reserves, dilating muscular arteries and shutting down vulnerable blood vessels. You are ready to fight giant octopuses in underwater cities or to flee from nameless beasts with glowing eyes. You could probably kill a moose with your bare hands, you're so worked up for fight or flight.

But all you find when you emerge is the dirty grey glare of unaccustomed daylight, an ordinary world where car crashes end in casualty. So you also leave in a peculiarly modern emotional condition - both glutted and unsatisfied, fed up with the jabbing persistence of

THOMAS SUTCLIFFE



the sensory assaults, but also twitchily hungry for more.

It isn't even as if the world outside looks tranquil by comparison - because Segaworld alerts you to how universally arousing contemporary life has become. From coffee-shops to advertising hoardings a vast commercial machinery exerts itself to alter our body chemistry

- to work on our minds in such a way that our money will follow. And this is, at least in degree, a relative historical novelty. On any given journey in London, for instance, a man will encounter more female erogenous zones than the average Elizabethan probably saw in a year. (Women aren't quite so relentlessly assailed but that's beginning to change. Buy your coffee at the right caffeine-boutique and you could easily find yourself watching a ladder-forced young man in wet jeans grinding through a pop song as you wait for your drink to be brewed.)

For men, probably the most conspicuous commercial seduction to be seen at the moment is the bus-stop campaign for Demi Moore's new film *Striptease*, in which the star sits stark naked, hugging her vestigial modesty to herself in a way that promises its imminent abandonment. Clearly this

image is a depleted one - it doesn't have the effect it might do if you turned through your bedroom door and found Demi propped up on your pillows with that inviting smile - but it can't be doing nothing at all. Even if the bell rings in a distant tinkle down the hall, it presumably has some effect on message systems which have to be employed for some time. Its tepid arousal must, however minutely, adjust your sexual responses, if only by turning down the volume so as to make daily life possible.

Art is not much help in this respect, being quite as efficient at virtual reality as any computer, and just as good at the seductive lie as advertising. *Bertolucci's Stealing Beauty*, for example, offers male viewers (and maybe some women too) a pretty effective simulation of a summer crush. Cinema has proved itself very good at such feelings, partly because it can fill your field of vision with a face in

that makes up our felt experience.

I would guess that it's being re-engineered in the direction of

diminished sensitivity. "Try telling your

brain it's not real" is the catchphrase

attached to much of Segaworld's

publicity. It's a motto that will stand just

as well for the clamorous, arousing,

sleeve-tugging world at large.

Outings, page 13

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Weekend events, Saturday and Sunday television and radio

cover photograph:
Performing Arts Library



Life's just one long gamble

Today is the 220th St Leger, Britain's oldest classic horse race. Bookmakers expect £8m to £10m to be staked. Mark Holder will be taking a special interest. He's a professional gambler. Photograph by Marc Hill

CHARLIE BAIN



In another life

around like vultures, too scared to converse, but keeping an ear cocked for any words of wisdom he might accidentally spill into their lap.

He stands by the saddling enclosure and sizes up the horses for the next race. Carefully marking his racecard, he spills out jargon: Some horses are "poor walkers" others are "backward" in condition. As they run down to the post, he sighs: "Look at that knee action, there's no way that horse will go on this ground. It needs soft, that's definitely one to remember for next time."

Loitering by the parade ring are three other professional backers - friends, but essentially the enemy. Mark joins them and they all chat amiably, moaning about the last race, discussing the options for the next without actually committing themselves to which horse they are going to back. The unwritten rule to be a member of this clan is to keep your selection quiet. Otherwise everyone backs the same horse and the price depletes rapidly. Towering above the other three is Eddie Size 13 at least.

A nervous-looking man with receding red hair and a face riddled with boils sidles up to the group. Wearing a musty tweed jacket, nylon trousers and hush puppies he fidgets like a crazed animal with his brown leather binocular case. One gets the impression he's lost a fair whack. "Where's the value in National Hunt racing these days?" he moans. "I mean how could you have backed the winner of the last, eh?" His left eye begins to twitch violently: "And look at the next race, I wouldn't touch those nags with a barge pole." After a while it becomes apparent that the man with the boils is one of life's bores. Mark and "the shoe" slowly edge away from him.

At the end of the day's racing, Mark is looking fairly pleased with himself. He's won a fair sum and tipped the winner of one race on his tipping service. He says he won't be able to be a pro-gambler for ever ("If I did I'd end up in a padded cell one day with someone passing me my toast under the door") but admits that it beats the life of a double-glazing salesman. As he makes his way back to the car park, he takes the brown envelope out again and has another quick rummage. His face has a look of pure ecstasy. "Um, not a bad day," he says with a smile, "not a bad day at all."

Serena Mackesy is on holiday

In the betting ring at Exeter racecourse, the bookmakers are furiously compiling the odds for the fifth race - The Westrucks for Scania Handicap Hurdle over two miles and six furlongs. In the far corner of the ring Mark Holder starts fumbling about in a creased envelope stuffed full of £50 notes. Immaculately dressed in a black cashmere jacket and grey trousers, he is a little under six foot with caramel brown skin and dark hair, flecked with grey. He approaches a bookmaker and places a thick slice of the folded fifties on a horse called Santella Boy. His voice doesn't falter. He could have been ordering a cup of tea.

Santella Boy's jockey gives the horse a beautiful ride. Holding him up round the final bend, he edges him through the field to lead at the last hurdle. He hits the front, goes two lengths clear, idles slightly, and is pushed out to win by a neck. Mark's expression doesn't waver. He ambles over to the bookmaker, who reluctantly scratches around in his satchel and pays him in crumpled notes. A bespectacled man in a turquoise windcheater pulls me aside: "You're with Mark today, are you?" he asks in a hushed voice. "What a guy, what a life. He's stuffed the bookies more times than I can mention. Winning for him is like taking candy from a baby. He's a legend."

Mark lives with his wife, Louise, and two-year-old son, James, in a detached house in a quiet mid-class suburb of Bristol. Inside everything is immaculate. Cream carpets, butter-yellow walls, a new three-piece suite and teak veneer tables. It could belong to a bank manager, doctor or insurance salesman. But it doesn't. It's owned by a man in his early thirties who makes a very comfortable living from backing racehorses.

Each day, Mark wakes up at 6.15am and pours over form books and the racing press, piecing together which horse is best to back. At midday, he'll set off for one of the West Country race meetings, place a sizeable bet on a horse that he believes is a value bet and return home to his wife and son for tea. It's a job like any other, but what goes on the table that evening is dependent on how half-a-ton of horseflesh performs over two miles and six furlongs on soft-going.

Mark's wife, Louise, is not fazed by her husband's occupation. But then that's not surprising. Soon, the Holdens are moving out of their house to a £250,000 five-bedroom house down the road. They are also swapping their Nissan 200SX turbo for a 4-litre Cherokee jeep. Mark "works" from home. His office has the

starched feel of a doctor's surgery. In front of him on his desk is a computer, containing the form of every horse that has run in Britain for the past five years. To his right are three monitors, one showing the day's racing, another the odds, and a third to record every national hunt race that day. Behind him is a shelf stacked with form books and ring-binders. He reckons he spends around eight hours a day studying the form and watching past races. "If I was a double-glazing salesman, I put the amount of hours in that I put into gambling. I'd sell a lot of windows," he says.

A few years ago, Mark and his brother Paul staked £14,000 on the result of a photo-finish at Sandown racecourse. They lost the lot. It was hard to come to terms with but gambling to someone like Mark is an incurable addiction.

"Gambling is in my blood," he says. "My whole family have always been into it. My grandfather, who was a farmer, once lost the milk cheque betting on a tug-of-war pull - it was as bad as that." Mr Holder senior was a farmer who turned a moderately successful dairy farm into a thriving racing stables. Mark left school at 16 to work in the yard as an assistant trainer, but it was the gambling side of the job that really appealed to him. Eight years ago, he "made the hardest decision of my life" and left his father's yard to become a professional backer full-time.

He says he earns anything from £25,000 to £55,000 a year from gambling, which is somewhat disappointing. Most people have visions of professional backer gambling the sort of figures most of us associate with 25-year mortgages and

winning cash of lottery-jackpot proportions, quaffing champagne in racecourse bars across the country. "Not a bit of it," says Mark, "to gamble professionally you have to be incredibly disciplined and methodical. I only bet if I'm convinced a horse is going to win, and most importantly it has to be at the right price. I only bet on one horse a day and sometimes may not bet at all. I bet purely for profitability."

This disciplined approach was brought about by years of reckless abandon. "I've had a few stupid bets in the past, which I regret, and I had my fair share of fast cars, boozing and night clubs. It was very up and down in those days but I was still learning. When I got married I realised I had to be a bit more responsible."

This stability came in the form of a tipping service, which Mark now runs with Paul from a shop in Fortishead, Bristol. Paul looks after the administration, Mark and his partner Alan Potts, another pro-gambler, provide the tips. Punters pay £69 a month and in return get a secret phone number which they dial each day to hear the two experts' selections. Over the past five years all three men have built the business into one of the most successful and profitable tipping services in the country.

At Exeter racecourse, Mark is known in racing language as a "face", which means he is someone in the know. He is the man who the bookmakers fear and the punters worship. As he pouts around the bookies' ring he nods to trainers, jockeys come up and shake his hand, bookmakers mumble nervous greetings. Others hang

Mal

Promises

It was

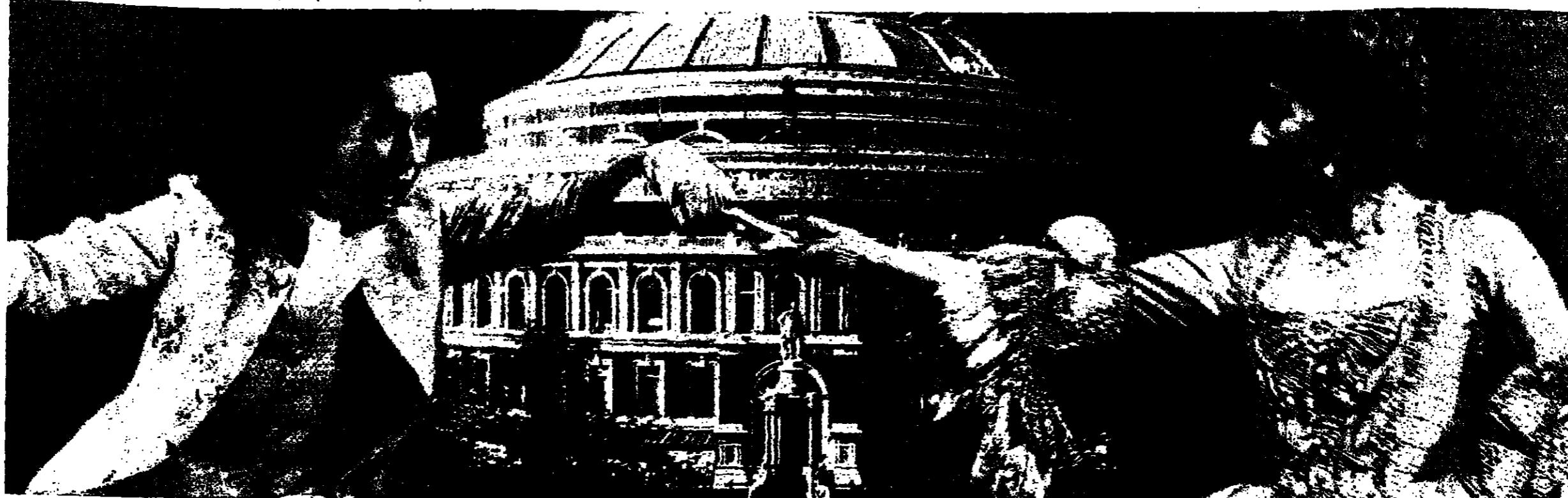
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Advertising

arts

Make it a Last Night to remember

Tonight, Felicity Lott and Ann Murray will be only the second duet to perform at the Last Night of the Proms. And they don't even have the decency to conform to petulant diva stereotypes — they're singing the 'Rule Britannia' solo together. And they're having fun. By David Benedict



PORTRITS: JANE LEMIS ALBERT HALL: JUDY SINE

There's a sublime irony at work in Stevie Wonder and Paul McCartney's famous hymn to togetherness, "Ebony and Ivory". The two of them never met. Recorded separately, the producer simply spliced their tracks together. Natalie Cole sang her way to seven Grammy awards for her album *Unforgettable* duetting with her father, Nat King Cole, who just happened to be dead.

Not all music-making is quite so cynical. Dame Felicity Lott, the Cheltenham-born soprano, and plain Ann Murray, the Dublin-born mezzo, not only harmonise on disc, they even perform together. Anyone who has missed the intimate pleasure of hearing their exquisitely matched voices can catch up tonight when they appear at the Last Night of the Proms. You don't even have to be one of the die-hard, flag-waving patriots who has spent the past week cluttering up the Kensington pavement in order to bag a ticket. The climax to the world's largest music festival — 72 concerts in eight weeks — is being relayed on screen to an expected audience of 40,000 in Hyde Park, broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and televised world-wide.

The prospect of singing in front of an estimated 100 million viewers doesn't seem to faze them. Ann Murray joins Sarah Walker as one of the two singers in living memory to have performed last night duties more than once (in 1992, alongside Lesley Garrett). It is, however, a first for Felicity Lott — known universally as Flott — but since she has sung at countless regular Proms, including several notable performances of Strauss's Four Last Songs, she's taking it in her graceful stride. Indeed, with just eight days to go, before settling down to some serious rehearsing, they are both distinctly larky, their welcoming grins defying the stereotypical image of the loud, proud diva with massive voice, frame and ego.

At Murray's Surrey home they are wearing jeans but tonight they'll go for a little more glamour. Murray announces that she isn't going to try to compete with Walker, who once appeared in a dress that opened out into a vast Union Jack. "You couldn't beat that. Anyway, I've never been a big fan of seeing Boudicca or Britannia and I don't have the, er, upper torso for it." "You could go as her twin," laughs Flott.

There have been celebrated operatic partnerships before, such as Callas and di Stefano or Sutherland and Horne, not to mention the new kids on the block, Alagna and Gheo-

rgiu, but none has done it in quite the same way. Both distinguished soloists with major international careers, they have been touring the world's leading concert halls from the Met to Madrid and Milan since the late Eighties, giving duet lieder recitals with two highly regarded collections on EMI into the bargain.

It's not just that their voices sound so good together, something they say is unconscious. Only when singing in unison do they try to colour their voices to blend. On top of the intelligence, sensitivity and musicianship at work, they are obviously having a ball. With its old-fashioned image of stuffy parlours and lace-covered pianos (plus the not-so-lucrative deals), duet-singing is all too redundant of the amateur. It's nobody's first choice for a career, least of all theirs. "Having stumbled upon it though, it's jolly good fun," says Murray. "It's such fun to go on tour and on stage with somebody else. You have a freedom you don't have on your own. You can take that extra risk because you don't have 100 per cent responsibility. The balance moves from one person to the other. I don't sing with anybody else but Flott's so marvellous, she's well... graceful, musical, talented... you know, sickening."

Does Flott rate her partner? "Naah... Actually I've got such a complex about this one." "Oh get out of here!" says Murray. "No, we have a good relationship. She's so tolerant of my silly wants and Graham keeps us all together." It's all his fault. In 1976, accompanist Graham Johnson founded The Songmakers' Almanac with Flott, Murray, Anthony Rolfe Johnson and Richard Jackson, performing songs by a wide range of composers, many of which they rescued from oblivion. Everyone except Murray had studied at the Royal Academy of Music, but he had done the final masterclass with the legendary accompanist Gerald Moore in Manchester in 1971, and meeting him again after winning a singing competition, the link was made.

Since that time the three of them have cornered this previously disregarded market, singing Purcell, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Rossini, Massenet, Britten and even the odd giddy piece of Sullivan to remarkable effect. Do they spend their time burrowing for forgotten material? "Graham's the burrower," says Flott. "I don't think we can take too much credit." Tonight they are singing with Andrew Davis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra rather than Johnson and a piano. This gives them a chance to do more unusual repertoire.

The BBC is responsible for most of the programme, which explains the appearance of the Flower Duet from *Madame Butterfly* by Puccini, composed neither of them usually sings. "I've been practising Suzuki's Japanese giggle," confides Ann mock-seriously. "Mind you," she says, eyeing Flott's tall figure stretched languidly upon the sofa, "you couldn't do *Butterfly* on stage, not with your colouring. You'd have to sing it on your knees." Is Murray, a Handel and Mozart specialist, waiting for the unlikely day when her voice acquires a rich Italianate throb? "Oh yes! I'm waiting for that. I'm also waiting for Tina Turner's legs. That's what I want for my fifth birthday. No, I would love to be able to sing *Butterfly*. I love it. Flott wouldn't get past bar one: all that Japanese mascara would be on the floor." Flott agrees. "I have that trouble with *Rosenkavalier*. I couldn't cope with something where everybody dies."

Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* is their operatic calling card, with Flott playing the part of the pre-menopausal Marschallin, Murray the breeches role of her aristocratic young lover, Octavian. Flott's performance is available on video but no record company has captured the two of them together on disc, despite their having stormed opera houses around the world in another variant of their estimable double act. "Tom and Jerry", says Flott, a throwaway remark that obscures their acting skills, something they use to subtle effect in recital and on disc. Describing Flott's performance as Ellen Orford in a recent performance of Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, one critic declared that with this good, one wondered why the opera wasn't called *Ellen Orford*.

As Flott continues to develop her ever deepening Strauss repertoire, Murray is moving ever upwards from standard mezzo territory towards roles — such as Despina, the duplicitous servant-girl in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* — more traditionally associated with the soprano voice. ("She's pinching our repertoire," growls Flott). Conversely, she's also bravely Wagnerian waters with the Valkyrie sister Waltraute, which she sings next month in Covent Garden's new *Ring* cycles (she has nothing but praise for producer Richard Jones) and with her first Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*. "And when I'm not doing that I'll be in church, praying."

Given their golden reputations throughout Europe, one wonders why they aren't household names? Is it because they're not foreign? "We don't want the great publicity hype,"

replies Murray. "We don't belong to any particular record company that is going to invest the sort of money to put your name forward the whole time. If we were in the public eye all the time, people would be programmed to a degree into wanting to go to see and hear you. I want to stand on the stage because I can do it or because someone wants me to be there. I feel nervous if I'm pushed in a way I don't like."

On the other hand, they light up at the prospect of another recital disc, with perhaps a few lighter numbers. Murray cites an ENO gala where they performed the *Lakmé* duet, the theme tune to the British Airways advertisement, dressed up as stewardesses with Donald Sinden as a passenger. Then there's Flanders and Swann, an arrangement of "There's a Hole in My Bucket" or even in a tribute to their twin survival Sondheim's "I'm Still Here".

I ask them what they don't like about their voices. "How long have you got?" says Flott. "I would like one of those beautiful voices... like the ones I find boring." Murray's response is even swifter. "From about bottom G to top C sharp. I think the softer I sing the 'prettier' it is... if you can't hear me at all it's wonderful. But hear it we will. Flott's worried she will cry on the night. The Proms don't have quite the same meaning for Murray because she's Irish, but she regards it as a great honour to be invited. After all, it's only the second time in the Proms' 102-year history that we've had a vocal double-act for the last night."

So who exactly will get to sing "Rule, Britannia", the treasured solo spot in the midst of all the raucous community-singing that makes up the traditional finale to British music's annual Last Night jamboree? Typically, Flott and Murray will be sharing the verses between them, singing the first verse together, taking turns on verses two and three, and coming together again for the final sprint, with Murray on melody, Flott on descant.

"I think we should cultivate a huge rivalry," declares Flott. "The public is much more interested in fights between prima donnas than people who get on. 'Will they hit each other on stage?' The chances of these two coming to blows is virtually non-existent. But anyone who has witnessed them tearing into the notorious "Cat Duet", or seen Murray demolishing 10-foot statues while singing "Rise Ye Furles From Babel's Abysses" in *Xerxes* or heard Flott's chilling, heartrending Governess in *The Turn of the Screw* will know that anything is possible.

Proms in the Park: for the first time. Tonight's the night...

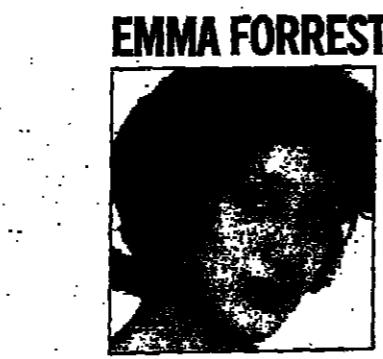


Land of Hope and Glory — 'Rule, Britannia' — 'Jerusalem': three titles that spell out 'The Last Night of the Proms'. Until tonight, the only way of enjoying all the flag-waving fun has been to join the 5,000 stalwarts at the Royal Albert Hall. Either that, or sit at home glued to BBC1 or Radio 3. But now, thanks to support from AT&T, the whole of the second half will be beamed by video link on to giant screens in Hyde Park, where a potential throng of 40,000 will be able to join in the annual singalong. And just to get everyone in the mood, there's a special 'Proms in the Park' first half, with an hour and a half of light classical favourites performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra with special guests James Galway, Marin Alsop and the Labéque Sisters. Hyde Park Speaker's Corner Gates open 4pm. Show starts 6pm. Tickets £7.50 (plus booking fee) from selected HMV and Tower Record stores only. Information hotline: 0171-413 3571

It was going to be nuns or lesbians for us. And we were quite excited

The first thing you need to know is that I loved *Showgirls*. Not in a campy, jokey way. I actually thought it was an inspiring movie — a full-frontal *Fame*. I tell you this because I want you to understand why I went to see *Voyeurz*. Despite the scathing reviews and the fact that it closes, prematurely, I hoped that the "pornographic lip-stick lesbian musical" had been misinterpreted due to the shackles of media irony. Unfortunately, no. It was shockingly bad (and boring) on every level. My God, I thought *Showgirls* was good. Now I think it's Ingmar Bergman.

Myself and my girlfriends are especially upset because, frankly, we had been considering becoming lesbians and since seeing *Showgirls* we don't even fancy Drew Barrymore anymore (even the most staunchly heterosexual girl has a crush on Drew Barrymore). I think it was the lousy acting, S&M gear, strobe lights, astonishingly unattractive women and techno-beat chants of "Love, desire, sex, pain/whips, religion, lust, shame!" that did it. We had been considering becoming vegetarians too, so thank goodness they didn't try to make that into an erotic musical and we would have been straight out the



door looking for the nearest McDonalds. And we really had been up for it. We've had a bad time with boys of late and had come to agree with Jack Lemmon's statement in *Some Like It Hot* that men are "nasty, hairy beasts with eight hands". It was going to be nuns or lesbians for us. And we were quite excited about it. We just weren't prepared for the warped male idea of how two girls in love behave. I love you, so I'm going to tie you up and make you watch me do a strange, sub-Madonna leather dance. Get me out of here.

Looking around, we saw that the theatre was peopled solely with beery lads on stag

nights and we began to feel very self-conscious. It's not that I'd be embarrassed if anyone thought I was Susie's lover. We'd make a bloody good couple, actually. She has the face of Shirley MacLaine, the body of Jane Mansfield and the personality of Jimmy Crank. Aged eight, she convinced her classmate that she had written "Free Nelson Mandela" until she began to believe it herself. At the same age, I was convinced that I had won the London marathon (when in fact my dad had carried me on his shoulder in a fun run, and Jimmy Savile had said "well done", which is why I was confused — easy mistake to make). And we're both in love with Jim Carrey and Gene Wilder. Yes, the strongest argument that we should go out together is that we fancy it all the same. Doh. Okay, so even if it's not meant to be, I wouldn't give a damn if people think we're lesbians. I just really don't want the men in the audience to think we were part of the show.

As they unleashed rubber techno anthem after rubber techno anthem and gyrated like evil monkeys, I was so upset that I had to get off me. They'll think we are! They'll drag us up on stage." This was not an antic-

ing prospect, peopled as the show was with a vile assortment of women who looked like they would sleep with Jack Nicholson. According to the next day's tabloids, many of them had. Chris Minna, who is the only genuine lesbian in the show, almost made it less awful. It used to be said that Jean Simmons looked like a sketch of Elizabeth Taylor. Chris Minna looks like a sketch of Justice Frischmann. She's absolutely gorgeous. So for about five seconds, we were back on the path to sapphic heaven. And then one of the Jack Nicholson birds took her kit off.

The minds behind *Voyeurz* had wisely removed the interval so that people couldn't walk out, but we did anyway. And we staggered up Whitehall, feeling quite queasy, scraping at our flesh like Lady Macbeth, desperate to feel clean again. Things have not really been the same between us since. I don't think Susie trusts me not to get drunk one night and force her to watch me do an evil monkey dance. Damn them and their nasty leather and crap choreography. If I was living in America, I would sue the producers of *Voyeurz* for curtailing my potential interest in lesbianism and for damaging my sense of adventure.



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All you need to know about the books you meant to read
by Gavin Griffiths

EUGENE ONEGIN
by Alexander Pushkin (1832)

Plot: Onegin, hero of this verse novel, swans about St Petersburg, seducing girls and guzzling champagne. He inherits a plush rural retreat and decides to play the country gent. Tedium prods him to befriend teen poet Lensky. The latter is awash with romanticism and passion for Olga, the local squire's daughter. *Onegin* meets Olga but prefers her plain sister, Tatyana. Tatyana implodes under the impact of *Onegin's* vacuous brooding. She writes him a letter of raw adoration. *Onegin*, though flattered, explains that he is not the marrying kind. Months later, at a party for Tatyana's name day, *Onegin* flirts with Olga. Lensky, outraged, challenges him to a duel. They fight; Lensky is shot dead. *Onegin* exits, leaving Tatyana to mourn. Three years on in Moscow, *Onegin* meets a swish society lovely. It is Tatyana, now married. Smitten, he makes advances; they are elegantly repulsed. *Onegin* trundles off, disconsolate.

Theme: Pushkin's Russia is busy, exuberant and self-renewing. Although youth should be open to this vitality, paradoxically, it remains swaddled in asphyxiating impersonations of feeling.

Style: Both expansive and terse. Like Byron in *Don Juan*, the poet participates in his own poem.

Chief strengths: The author's relationship with his creations is consistently elusive. The characters misbehave with all the capricious spontaneity of real people.

Chief weaknesses: Pushkin's oblique wish to exonerate *Onegin* entails Lensky's sporadic humiliation.

What they thought of it then: There were demands for *The Further Adventures of Eugene*. Pushkin footed about but the sequel never appeared.

What we think of it now: Critics see their own concerns reflected in each polished stanza. Humanists explore Pushkin's humanity; formalists fulminate about form; ideologues see evidence of socio-political dissent. They all agree that *Onegin* is the source of the Russian novel.

Who's reading whom

Justin Cartwright finds imperial interests outweighed lofty ideals in the Boer War

Growing up in South Africa we were given a very specific picture of the Boer War which age, distance and reading on that massive subject has changed. Thomas Pakenham's *The Boer War* (1979), which I read this summer, is a revelation. We were not told, for example, that the blacks were conscripted, sometimes as labour, sometimes as soldiers, on both sides – although they preferred the British – or that when the war began in 1899, British aims included protecting the Africans from the Boers. In the end imperial interests in gold and land drove the British to compromise with the Boers and to buy collaborators. When Chamberlain visited the Cape after the war, there was no mention of liberal legislation for the blacks. By 1913 the Native Land Act had effectively put paid to it.

Letting the Woolf off the hook

Do we think of Virginia Woolf as a sensitive lady novelist? Or as an anti-Semitic snob? Miranda Seymour reports

Virginia Woolf by Hermione Lee, Chatto, £20

In 1928, Virginia Woolf was 46 years old and able, at last, to say that she had laid the ghosts of the past in her novel, *To the Lighthouse*, published the previous year. Noting on her father's birthday that it would have been his 96th, she thanked God for his death in 1904, when she was still a young woman. "His life would have entirely ended mine," she wrote in her diary. "What would have happened? No writing, no books – inconceivable."

Sir Leslie Stephen was a difficult father, doar and demanding, but one of the many merits of Hermione Lee's scrupulous and detailed biography is the emphasis it places on other factors which contributed to Virginia's enduring sense of nervousness and insecurity. The details of sexual abuse by her half-brothers, Gerald and George Duckworth, are carefully examined and serious consideration is given to the likely effect on her of the regular intrusions of her mad cousin James, a would-be suitor to her older half-sister Stella (and one of the many candidates for the role of Jack the Ripper). Quentin Bell's two-volume life of his aunt dealt lightly with the presence in the house of Laura, the autistic daughter of Leslie Stephen's first marriage. She was, in his view, a family joke. Lee is more sensitive in judging the likely effect on Virginia and Vanessa. Can the impact of Laura and of James be separated from Virginia's later view of mental defectives when she wrote, "They should certainly be killed"?

Julia Stephen, her mother, died when Virginia was 13; Stella, already a young woman, became substitute wife and mother until, in the face of vigorous opposition from Sir Leslie, she escaped into marriage. Her tragically premature death in 1897 marked the opening of the grimness period of Virginia's early life and the last six years of her father's, during which he confined his daughters to a regimen of resentful docility.

Virginia was 22 when Sir Leslie's death liberated the sheltered, home-educated sisters to a new life and to their first – mildly disappointing – encounters with "Bloomsbury" in the form of their brother Thoby's university friends. Thoby's death in 1906 and Vanessa's choice, that year, of a rich, middle-class husband, Clive Bell, increased Virginia's sense of isolation and despair. Vanessa was, in Lee's view, largely responsible for engineering her sister's marriage, in 1912, to Leonard Woolf.

Woolf was a sensitive, courageous man whose own extreme unhappiness when young enabled him to empathise with Virginia's frequent and overwhelming periods of despair, melancholy and madness. He is given rather a rough ride by Ms Lee. Virginia's unpressed anti-Semitism and her snobbish patronage of his family are excused as being typical of the period. But they are not, surely, so easily excusable in a wife. Woolf's careful guardianship of a brilliant but terrifyingly



Wickedly entertaining: Clive Bell and Virginia Woolf at the seaside

volatile woman, his steady support of her work and his subordination of his own needs to hers – all these are, I think, too readily dismissed here. Leonard is blamed for refusing to allow his wife to bear a child. No consideration is given to the possibility that the Hogarth Press could have been devised by him as a valuable form of therapy for Virginia; yet Leonard might well have seen the "excruciating" slow labour of typesetting as a soothing work for a highly-strung mind.

Virginia Woolf was 33 when she published her first novel, *The Voyage Out; Mrs Dalloway*, published 10 years later, marked the moment when she could see herself regarded as a writer whose reputation would endure. Neurotically at-ease with her physical appearance (although she knew that many thought her beautiful), she was both competitive and insecure about her work. As a young girl she watched and learned from her sister's painting techniques, honing her pros on landscapes. Maturing into a novelist, she kept a beady eye on the competition and felt triumphant when the younger Katherine Mansfield seemed to have lost her touch in the story "Bliss". "She's done for!" Virginia wrote with glee. Only after Mansfield's premature death in 1923 did she begin, a little grudgingly, to acknowledge that the younger woman's work deserved serious consideration. Colette, different enough not to be perceived as a rival, was the only woman writer for whom Woolf's praises were not carefully qualified.

Lee is anxious to rescue Virginia from the image of sensitive lady novelist, although I wonder if that is really how we still perceive her. To emphasise Woolf's engagement with politics and contemporary culture, she is restrained in her use of the diaries and letters which show the malicious and often wickedly entertaining side of her nature. Instead, she seeks to exonerate her from accusations of fascism (the image of Virginia waving to Nazi crowds in Germany in the Thirties has created a degree of uncertainty) and presents *Three Guineas* (in which she startlingly compared Hitler to St Paul) as powerfully subversive. Lee's

arguments are strongly made, but it is hard to see a democratic spirit in a woman who wrote during the war of her disgust with the local villagers' fund-raising theatricals: "... these plays which they can't act unless we help. I mean, the minds so cheap, compared with ours, like a bad novel – that's my contribution – to have my mind smeared by the village and WEA mind; & to endure it, & then simpler."

Rich, intelligent and persuasive though this new biography is, I would hesitate before calling it definitive. Its meticulous examination of Woolf's career will make it an invaluable source for students and devotees, but readers who are less thoroughly familiar with the subject may be frustrated by Lee's decision to compartmentalise the life. Chapters on "Madness", "Bloomsbury" and "Reading" are more akin to closely-worked essays than to the subtle process of development which most of us look for in a biography. For that, the reader should still turn to Woolf's own writings, and to the life written in 1972 by Quentin Bell.

"Your father was a wonderful liar"

Louise Kehoe has written a book to exorcise the demons of her childhood. Sue Gaisford reports

Here is a true story built on lies. It is very nearly incredible, but we have to believe it. As fiction it would be risibly implausible: no novelist would dare to invent a villain as despicable, ruthless and gratuitously vicious as the man at its centre, Louise Kehoe's father, the Russian architect Berthold Lubetkin.

There is scarcely a page that does not detail the many ways in which this man did his best to ensure that his children had a thoroughly miserable and frightened childhood. He kept a detailed Book of Grievances in which their every tiny misdemeanour was noted; he encouraged them to spy on each other; he allowed them no privacy, no freedom, no friends.

Sometimes he resorted to towering rage, sometimes to physical violence; more often, he would devise subtle, insidious methods of undermining his children's self-confidence. Here is a tiny example: Louise, his third and youngest child, was happy that a painting of hers

In This Dark House
by Louise Kehoe
Viking, £17

was to be displayed at her school speech day. Her father decided to steal one of the pictures – but not Louise's, which he dismissed as pedestrian and unimaginative. He came home with another girl's, which he framed and hung in the living-room as a daily reminder of his daughter's inadequacy.

The Lubetkins had left London in 1939 to farm in Somerset. They knew nothing about agriculture, but before long the famous architect had devised early versions of veal-crates for his stock and, says his daughter, managed to invent factory farming. Ardent communists, resolute misanthropists and militant atheists, they had children only

because abortions were hard to procure in wartime. He would have preferred to have his wife exclusively to himself, and he made her wear scarlet lipstick and high-heeled shoes to please him. There is a particularly ghastly description of her agonizing death from cancer. Berthold snatched away her morphine, insisted on the lipstick, force-fed her anguished, emaciated frame and took photographs of her as she was dying.

After her death, Lubetkin took to gambling and fast women, enjoying a late resurgence of fame as the rediscovered father of British modernism, and revelling in a glitzy lifestyle into extreme old age. His daughter Louise battled to make a career for herself, but she developed severe anorexia – an episode described with devastating accuracy and uncompromising frankness – and seems only to have survived thanks to furious determination and the unswerving love of her husband. It is to be hoped that this book



the end, the search for the secret source of his grotesque character assumes the nature and pace of a detective story. Though he had always claimed that his entire family had perished in the Russian Revolution, she made a chance discovery, after his death, that he had a cousin still living in New York. "Your father", said this cousin, fascinated by her account, "was a wonderful liar". At last, she learned his true identity and discovered the terrible things that had happened in his youth. At last, she began to understand something of his motivation.

To understand is, they say, to forgive; perhaps she has managed to forgive him for all the pain he inflicted. But, for the reader, the unravelling of the past is not quite enough. The monster is not eradicated. There is, at the end, some sense of resolution, but the lasting impression created by this damaged daughter is of calculated, sustained, inhuman cruelty.

Pierrots, peacocks and prostitutes

Dermot Clinch reads an unemotional inquiry into the manic depressive psyche of Franz Schubert

For New Year's Eve 1826 one of Schubert's friends wrote a comedy in which the composer and his circle figured in the guise of various stock theatrical characters. Schubert, in a fair indication of how he was seen given the part of Pierrot: lazy, alcoholic, and tied inseparably to his pipe. The culmination of the entertainment came with Pierrot-Schubert marching on stage at the head of "a silent chorus of smokers" who all, simultaneously, to the sound of music, lit up.

As this new biography makes clear, Schubert was indeed a heroin smoker. Had Elizabeth McKay been at that New Year's party she would have told the composer in categorical terms what his "nicotine abuse" was doing to his health; not to mention his alcohol abuse, his opium smoking, his womanising and even – uncertain, but the possibility must be considered – his pedophilia.

The pedophilia is not proven, though this hasn't stopped Schubert becoming the focus of musicalological attention for it in recent years. "Schubert ailing" reads a cryptic note in the diary of one of the composer's friends:

natures, foreign to each other." His soul was dragged to "the slough of moral degradation" by his craving for pleasure.

Quite what those cravings were is not, and will perhaps never be, clear. Surviving documents in Schubert's hand are few and unrevealing, while after his death a conspiracy of silence appears to have developed to protect his reputation. He used prostitutes, it is suggested. He never married; one woman he loved didn't want him; another, of aristocratic birth, was a hopeless passion. His syphilis is now established with certainty, but provides biographers with evidence of an active sexuality and little more. Where his contemporaries described the composer as victim of the "black-winged daemon of sorrow and melancholy", Elizabeth McKay follows the modern consensus in judging Schubert as a mild manic-depressive.

On the whole, though, psychology is not this biographer's thing. Her work is somewhat unemotional: the facts are presented and then so are a few more. On some points – the humble origins of Schubert's parents in the Moravian countryside, the shifting

ethos of his circles of friends – McKay dilates at length, in support, often, of her theme that Schubert was torn between an instinctive wildness and an acquired morality. But who knows what caused his negligence, his disloyalty, or other "such lapses"? McKay's multiple choice treatment of such questions – "temperamental disorder, artist's licence, character defect" – is not illuminating.

Schubert died aged 31 in 1828, having achieved in his short life what has often been called a kind of miracle. How his songs, from the very earliest, sprang with such apparent ease from his pen may always be a mystery. But there are areas of his creative life where biographies might shed light. What does his passion for *The Last of the Mohicans* tell us about the composer's inner life? What pressures did Beethoven exercise on his creative psyche? What led Schubert to seek tuition in counterpoint and fugue in his final years? Next year – Schubert year, the bicentenary of his birth – may perhaps bring answers to such questions, with two new Schubert titles announced from this publisher alone.

Royal Festival Hall
on the South Bank

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17 Sept	J G Ballard with Kevin Jackson <i>Fiction International</i>
18 Sept	Christopher Reid Rich, startling metaphors and a quirky surreal preoccupation with the spiritual
25 Sept	Jacqueline Brown and Maura Dooley Compassionate, lyrical, adventurous and highly recommended poetry
26 Sept	Margaret Atwood, Louis de Bernières and Javier Marías <i>Fiction International</i>
1 Oct	Michèle Roberts <i>Essays</i>
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4

Into the black hole

Michael Arditti enjoys a complex study of memory

Distance

by Colin Thubron

Heinemann, £15.99

Memory is the spine of identity. Without it, our lives would be paralysed. To live in the present may be a widely held ideal, but to live fully in the present – not simply to experience, but to assess and evaluate that experience – requires constant reference to the past.

This is the paradox affecting Edward, the central figure of Colin Thubron's latest novel, who "comes to" in a restaurant near Gloucester, having had the last two years of his memory wiped out. His bewilderment and sense of loss is described with a poetry and a pathos that recall the true-life case histories of Oliver Sacks's *Awakenings*. But it is the process of recovering his memory that constitutes the chief interest of the book.

Thubron generates considerable narrative excitement from Edward's attempts to track down the trauma that led to the loss. He is forced to confront the death of his mother and his strained relationship with his father, the reasons for his humiliating inability to recall anything about his present partner, Naomi, and, above all, his relationship with his driven, self-destructive colleague Jacqueline. And yet, for all Thubron's skill, the order in which the memories return can seem contrived, appearing to suit the novelist's convenience rather than the natural workings of Edward's mind.

The book's power, however, does not lie in the story but in the complex intellectual and symbolic scaffolding that Thubron erects on it. Edward is an astronomer, specialising in black holes – and it is clear that his own life has been sucked into one. His study of a volatile universe has led him to belittle human achievement and religious faith. Yet even as he dissociates himself from his past ("I don't believe in a self. Whatever I am now is me"), his desperate attempts to recover his memory reveal his need for it. And despite Edward's declaration that "Astronomy makes history seem small", Thubron underlines the irony that astronomers are dealing with data far more ancient than any historian. Indeed, Edward's own research is in a "zone so distant that the light which reached Earth had set out in the Palaeolithic age".

The universe may be ever-expanding but Thubron's narrative is very much a closed system. Everything revolves around the theme of change and permanence like planets around a star. Even a chance encounter in a restaurant is with a woman whose belief in reincarnation poses the question of whether we have simply lost the memory of our past lives. Likewise, the one old friend whom Edward visits has become a monk and exhibits a childlike innocence that Edward both envies and derides. For Harry, there is a *Proustian* sense that time regained is paradise re-entered.

Distance is very similar in style, structure and narrative voice to Thubron's earlier novel, *Falling*. In that book, Mark was imprisoned (literally) by his memories, just as, here, Edward is incapacitated by his lack of them. Both men are torn between two archetypal women, the light and the dark. In *Falling*, these are Katherine (a stained-glass artist) and the ironically named Clara (a trapeze artist), the guardian and the fallen angel; in *Distance*, they are Naomi (once again an artist) and Jacqueline, who consciously defines herself as Edward's "dark companion" – that is, the black hole which accompanies a star.

Distance is a highly wrought, tautly written, thought-provoking novel even though its astrophysical detail, which Thubron makes no attempt to render palatable to the reader, lacks mythic clarity. But, despite the complexity of the science, the use to which Thubron puts it – not just as intellectual background, but to inform the conception of the character and consciousness – is fascinating.

To adopt his own central metaphor, it is a novel truly of the present but one which will linger in the memory to connect with both future and past.

In the prison of male fantasy

Margaret Atwood's new novel is a Gothic tale of sex and class. By Carole Angier

Alias Grace by Margaret Atwood, Bloomsbury, £15.99

Alias Grace is a first for Margaret Atwood. One of our richest imaginers of the present and future has written a novel set in the past, and based on a real historical case. But what a case! The cool and macabre face on the cover conceals and misleads, like the voice of Grace inside. Behind them lurks a lush and bloody tale of sex and class, madness and murder.

Atwood sums up the real story in an Afterword. In Ontario in 1843, Grace Marks, a servant girl aged 16, was found guilty of the murders of her employer, Thomas Kinnear, and his housekeeper, Nancy Montgomery. Grace's accomplice James McDermott was hanged; she was given a life sentence, and spent 30 years in Kingston Penitentiary. In 1872, after many petitions in her favour, she was granted a pardon and set free.

The case attracted the journalists of the time for the same reasons that it attracts Atwood now – except that it is the reasons themselves that fascinate her. Nancy Montgomery was Kinnear's mistress and pregnant with his child. Grace Marks was very young and very pretty. Everyone thought she was McDermott's lover, and either his victim, or else the instigator of the murders, driven by love for Kinnear and jealousy of Nancy. What became of her, and whether she was really innocent or guilty, mad or sane, are unknown. This is an Atwood-shaped space, a perfect case for her concerns: women as the objects of men's lusts and fears, and the connections between sexual and political exploitation.

The story unfolds through letters, poems and contemporary accounts, but mostly through two narratives: one telling what happens to Simon Jor-

dan, a young practitioner of the new science of the mind, as he examines Grace; and Grace's telling of her own story, as she answers (or evades) his questions.

Grace's narrative is the feminist thesis of this novel, a second *Handmaid's Tale*. When Simon first meets her, he imagines a maiden in a towered dungeon, a mad, wide-eyed, shivering girl; then she steps into the light, and he sees a self-possessed woman. This is the key to her story, which is about the way men project their sexual desires and fears onto women, and call them mad and evil.

But Margaret Atwood has moved beyond *The Handmaid's Tale*, to *Cat's Eye* and *The Robber Bride*, which see cruelty and treachery in women too. And that is where they are in the anti-feminist antithesis of Simon's narrative: in his crazy, clinging landlady and his silly, match-making mother, both of whom wrap him in the coils of their self-absorption, "like being fawned on by rabbits or covered with syrup".

The truth seems to be that if men project their fantasies on women, so do women project theirs on men; and in the end the women win. Grace Marks survives the projections of a nation, and escapes to marriage and freedom. But poor Simon is cut down by a cruel irony: sex brings him as close as it brought Grace to madness and murder, and he ends as she began, an amnesiac prisoner. He reminds one of poor Rochester, stuck sightless and single-handed with *Jane Eyre*.

But the main question is, of course, did Grace do it? And here Atwood's answer seems to me distinctly peculiar. Grace's alienation begins



Margaret Atwood: taking revenge on 20th century science.

when her doughty friend Mary Whitney dies; and at the climax of the novel, the voice in which she finally remembers the murders is Mary Whitney's. Simon's fledgling scientific explanation is of multiple personality; but the novel's own suggestion is a much older idea. Indeed it favours several spooky pre-scientific notions, such as fate, telepathy and clairvoyance.

Grace is afraid of the doctor, "with his bagful of shining knives"; and the most baleful image of the book is the cutting open, for sex or for knowledge, of the human (usually female) body

and mind. Altogether I suspect that Simon's sad ending is Atwood's punishment, not of men but of 20th century science.

Did I enjoy this, and Grace's happy ending, and the novel as a whole? I admired it; but no, I didn't really enjoy it. Ever since *Cat's Eye*, Margaret Atwood's novels have been getting too long. And I couldn't quite believe in the very good characters, like Jeremiah, or the very bad ones, like Simon's Gothic landlady. But that is what *Alias Grace* is: a Gothic fairy tale. It's certainly not very like Ontario.

Haunted by the demons of Derry

Patricia Craig reads a bleak quasi-fiction about growing up Catholic in 1940s Ulster

It is hard to tell, with *Reading in the Dark*, where autobiography ends and fiction begins. The book is about growing up Catholic in Derry in the 1940s and 50s. The narrator (un-named) comes third in a family of seven children, one of whom (Una) dies of meningitis and subsequently appears in front of the narrator, for an instant, "dressed in her usual tartan skirt and jumper, her hair tied in ribbons". Ghosts and demons haunt this family. Indeed, the whole locality seems awash in myths and fables, which can work in contradictory ways to impart information, and to keep things tantalisingly obscure.

Part of the author's purpose, however, is to show how myths and misconceptions arise in the everyday world. The young

narrator happens to witness a fatal accident, when a boy from a nearby street is run over by a lorry. It's the boy's own fault. A couple of policemen passing are sickened by the sight. Time goes by and the narrator hears a new account of the incident: the victim was mown down by a police car which didn't bother to stop. "Bastards". He holds his tongue: members of the RUC are not popular in the district. Thus, the garbled version passes into local dogma.

There is, we soon learn, "a burnt space in the heart of the neighbourhood". This, the site of a ruined distillery, is also at the heart of Seamus Deane's plot. Here, in 1922, a shoot-out between the police and the IRA took place. Afterwards one of the IRA men, the narrator's uncle

Reading in the Dark
by Seamus Deane
Cape, £13.99

Eddie, is missing. Allusions to the topic are either cagey or cryptic. And somehow connected to it are a family feud involving a farmhouse in Inishowen, a policeman thrown off Craigavon Bridge and drowned, the dumbstruck state of one neighbour, and the lassitude of another. There is something eating away at the heart of this family and it interferes as far as Deane's central character is concerned, with such commonplace diversions as football or going to the cinema.

He is 12 or so when he makes an error of judgement, flinging a stone at a police car and bringing it to a halt, to extricate himself from a sticky situation. Later, it is put about – falsely – that he blabbed the names of the louts attacking him and a friend. The term "police informer" is bandied about. The narrator, enraged by the injustice of the tag, has to suffer an additional insult: informing runs in the family. But does it? Over this hinted enormity, a question-mark is immediately raised. *Reading in the Dark* has a great deal to do with being kept in the dark, and being aware of it – however, the closer the narrator gets to the truth, the more destructive becomes the pressure of his undisclosed knowledge. It ends by estranging him from both his parents, but especially from his mother, as he struggles to get to grips with degrees and varieties of culpability, misfortunes and misbeliefs. Perhaps the family is meant to stand in in some way for Northern Ireland, scarred by inherited blight. It's a bleak story presented with increasing density; however, the book doesn't lack its moments of lightness. Saint Columb's College, Derry, yields up an instance or two of classroom elan; there is a farcical moment when the school's Spiritual Director tries to impress on a slightly bewildered pupil the need to be high-minded about sex; we even get a glimpse of Deane's most celebrated schoolfellow, his friend Seamus Heaney. *Reading in the Dark* is consistently felicitous in affect and compelling in atmosphere. But it's not optimistic.

Something nasty in the cistern

What if Hitler hadn't been born? Hugo Barnacle investigates

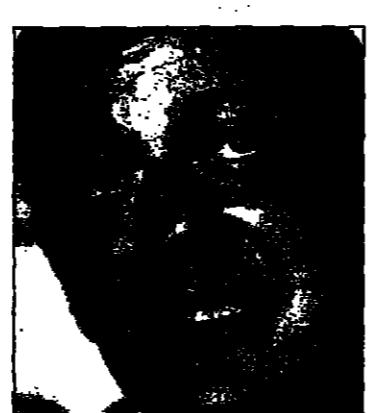
Suppose you are a graduate history student at Cambridge. Your on-off girlfriend is a biochemist who has perfected a male sterilisation pill and your acquaintance Professor Zuckermann is a physician who has perfected a machine capable of sending small samples of matter through space and time.

Obviously, you make use of the machine to project the pill into the water cistern that supplied the Hitler's street in Braunaum-Imbach in 1888. Little Adolf can't be born. Diddle. The snag is, as soon as you push the button, history changes so that you never came to this lab today to do the deed in the first place. Sucked into a quantum singularity, you black out, and either that's your lot, because history now dictates that your parents never met, or, as in Stephen Fry's new novel, you come round in a confusingly different world.

Fry's narrator and hero, Michael Young (funny how often authors' names share syllabic patterns with their central characters), finds himself in Princeton with everybody wondering why on earth he's suddenly started talking in a weird British accent. It seems that his parents defected from Nazi England in 1938 and he was born right here in the USA. And Europe is still Nazi, and so are Asia and Africa.

He should have foreseen something like this. Take Hitler out of the picture and not only do you still get popular grassroots Nazism, but Hitler could get someone less stupid than Hitler at the top. And remember, German doctors are thorough. They noticed the freak outbreak of sterility in Braunaum, traced it to the water and spent decades analysing samples till they could isolate and synthesise the molecules responsible. Guess which race they then

Making History
by Stephen Fry
Hutchinson, £15.99



choose to sterilise out of existence? Michael's only course is to find Zuckermann again and try to project something gobsmackingly putrid into the Braunaum water in 1888, so that nobody drinks it till the cistern has been drained and cleaned. That way Frau Hitler gives birth, millions die, but at least the Reich collapses in 1945.

Michael has an additional motive. He is increasingly drawn to his fellow Princeton student, Steve, who appears to reciprocate. Now, the technology in this alternative America is very advanced but the never-ending cold war with Berlin means that society is rather backward, all crew-cut conformity. Negroes know their place. No one has heard of rock'n'roll or hippies. And life for gays is a lonely hell. If only normal historical service could be resumed, Steve would be free to

PHILIP MARSDEN THE BRONSKI HOUSE

Magnificent... a Polish *Wild Swans*
meets *Dr Zhivago*

WILLIAM DALRYMPLE, *Sunday Times*

The book I've most savoured this year'

JOHN FOWLES, *Spectator*

flamingo

OUT NOW IN
PAPERBACK

Dusky maidens, tippling harpies and other lovers

DJ Taylor is seduced by the romantic aspirations of the 19th century

Victorian Love Stories: An Oxford Anthology edited by Kate Flint; Oxford University Press; £17.99



Enamoured: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'Study of Jane Morris' from 'Victorian Painting' by Christopher Wood (Antique Collectors Club, £35).

Confronted with the title of Kate Flint's attractively packaged Oxford anthology, a literary theorist would probably begin by asking: "What do we mean by 'Victorian love story'?" And for once that literary theorist would be right. Reckoning up the pageant of contributors - which ranges from Mrs Gaskell in the vanguard to Oscar Wilde trailing in the dusty and ironic rear - pondering the range of styles, treatments and dilemmas, it is not hard to conclude that this is simply a chronological convenience. If the late-20th century reader is sometimes hard put to define the vital ingredients of a 'love story', then separating out the Victorian variant can be a helpful exercise.

In fact *Victorian Love Stories* bears some odd chronological chalk-marks, if only in that the earliest selection dates from 1853. Surely they had Victorian love stories before that? What about Dickens? Thackeray ("The Rovers' Return", or "The Bedford Row Conspiracy") are a shade long for anthology fodder, but what about the stories in *Men's Wives*? Even minor early Victorians such as Bulwer Lytton or Mrs Gore? The answer is, perhaps, that there were early Victorian love stories, but that their mixture of comedy, sentiment and occasionally violent satire tends to detach them from the more stereotyped magazine stories of the second half of the century. Thackeray's story "Dennis Hagger's Wife" is a good example of this kind of tale: the account of an impressionable army surgeon tricked into marrying a vulgar woman blinded by smallpox. Visiting the pair and their multitudinous brood in Ireland, the narrator finds his friend enamoured in a shabby-genteel squalor, but still hopelessly fixated on the blind harpy tippling by the fire. Savagely written and brutal in its satiric effects, this is still a love story, if of a rather specialised and uncommercial sort.

The commercial connection is important, for the form of the mid-century love story was largely dictated by the medium in which it appeared: the monthly magazine. This not only constrained in length, but bound it to the predominantly middle-class sensibilities of its readers. Happy endings were encouraged, however uncomfortably they might sit on what had gone before, and Kate Flint quotes a letter sent by Dickens in his capacity as editor of *Household Words* to a tyro contributor ("You will be read of course: The close of the story is unnecessarily painful - will throw off numbers of persons who would otherwise read it...") Predictably these restrictions affected even the name writers of the period. Reading contributions by Mrs Gaskell and Wilkie Collins, you are struck by how ready these superior talents are to sacrifice themselves to the contemporary weakness for sensation - Gaskell's "Right At Last" is an all-too-foreseeable twitching of the part's dead hand, Collins' "The Captain's Lost Love", a preposterous (though highly enjoyable) tale about dusky maidens on volcanic South Sea atolls.

In her intelligent introduction, Kate Flint suggests that "for the Victorians to write of love almost always meant offering some kind of reflection on the position of women in society." This seems at the same time questionable and yet somehow not true enough.

The point about any reflection on "love", surely, whether written by Catullus or Catherine Cookson, is that it will touch in some way or another on the position of women in society - heart-strings aside that is what love stories are

about. Simultaneously, Flint's point seems compromised by the fact that many of the early stories here take place in a semi-sensationalised other world - Collins's desert island, the Cornish coast of Trollope's "Malachi's Cove" - outside the society they are supposed to be reflecting. Undoubtedly, this is itself a comment on contemporary society arrangements (and no doubt Collins's sea captain pursues dusky charmers because his friends' sisters didn't provide the same kind of emotional outlet) but the social commentary exists at the bottom of a heap of more pressing narrative concerns.

Nonetheless, Flint is right to stress the magazine story's status as a kind of social *timus* paper. Most of the late-Victorian preoccupation about social mobility and the observance or defiance of increasingly shaky conventions are here represented in nearly every literary sub-genre of the period. Mrs Braddon contributes an example of the breathless sensationalism for which she was renowned ("Her Last Appearance") in which an actress misused by a brutal husband (eventually murdered by her aristocratic admirer) dies of consumption. Kipling's "Georgie Porgie" lays bare some Imperialist double standards, while A. St John Adcock's "Bob Harris's Deputy" hails from the fashionable late-Victorian school of sentimental stories about slum life.

Moving through the first half of the book, one spends a large amount of time wondering when naturalism - that is, the notion of two people engaged in a relationship that isn't worked out by way of genre devices, but seems to depend on "natural" accidents of psychology - will arrive. Hardy's "The Son's Veto" in which a widow is forbidden to marry beneath her, conspicuously fails to achieve this, settling instead for a wholly constricting symbolism. A much better attempt comes in Hubert Crackenthorpe's "A Conflict of Egotism". Here a successful woman journalist becomes obsessed by a self-absorbed writer who inhabits a flat in her apartment block. Their marriage is a disaster, both parties being locked into irreversible patterns of thought and behaviour. In the end he throws himself off a bridge.

The woman journalist or authoress - the most common contemporary ideal of the successful professional female - turns up, too here. Come the 1880s and 1890s, the magazine-story heroine is an increasingly resourceful and powerful figure, capable of travelling abroad with a man unchaperoned (Somerset Maugham's "De Amicitia") or leading an independent life after a scandalous divorce (George Egerton's "A Little Grey Glove"). Yet the staples of the genre endure. Eileen T. Flower's "An Old Wife's Tale" (1897) in particular, contrives an archetypal combination of sentiment and ghostly implausibility. An old blind man has long been blissfully married, having lost his sight rescuing the object of his affections and her sister from a blazing house. Inevitably, he turns out to have chosen (or had chosen for him) the wrong girl.

Much as one regrets a few conspicuous absences (Gissing, Mary Mann, Arthur Morrison, even a sentimental George R Sims), *Victorian Love Stories* is an excellent collection. Customarily in exercises of this kind the reader is left wondering how much of the contents stands the test of time and how much is merely representative. Here about two-thirds falls into the former category, and it is a mark of Kate Flint's achievements that one would very much like to read a work of her literary criticism on the same subject.

A hack at the Nautico Club

Forty years on, JG Ballard is as thrillingly wired as ever. By Nicholas Wroe

The continued ability to keep coming up with new J.G. Ballardisms is extraordinary. It is now 40 years since the publication of his first short stories yet he is still conjuring up the most dazzlingly original and unsettling images coupled to unfailingly depressing and plausible visions of the future. *Cocaine Nights*, his 24th fiction work, features a good showing of the old favourites in the form of swimming pools (drained and undrained), skin abrasions after rough-house sex and the minutiae of enthusiastic DIY pharmacology. But there are also some stunningly prescient new snapshots from the uniquely wired Ballard mindspace.

I was particularly taken with both a melted TV remote control and the remains of an old man, a young girl and her unborn child discovered in a Jacuzzi. But dominating *Cocaine Nights* is a single magnificent image which perfectly encapsulates the book's main thesis. An unmanned tennis machine sends down a fizzing supply of kicking, swerving and biting services onto a baking Spanish court, empty

Cocaine Nights
by J.G. Ballard
Flamingo, £16.99

but for a broken wooden racket and a bloody corpse. It's all you really need to know. The future is leisure plus technology and it's not for the squeamish.

Cocaine Nights is set amongst the ex-pat Brits of Estrella De Mar on the Costa del Sol. Whereas neighbouring towns and complexes are full of London villains and tranquilised retirees, Estrella and its focal point, The Club Nautico, is buzzing with civic pride and artistic endeavour. There's an active and representative town council, the theatre group is mounting a season of Stoppard plays (Pinter next), the choral society is fully subscribed and the theatre club is advertising a Renoir retrospective.

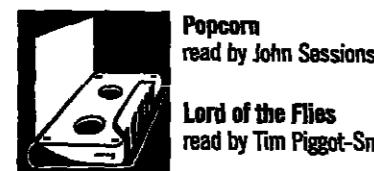
For, paradoxically, what has made Estrella into a haven fit for sushi-eating subscribers to the New

York Review of Books, is the calculated introduction of vice and crime. Dr Sanger, a spooky psychiatrist, tells Charles that, "in the age of leisure the only thing that can keep people interested in living is crime and transgressive behaviour", and Bobby Crawford, charismatic tennis pro, was the man to provide it. He discovered that petty crime brought in more tennis lessons. People became fired up by a determination not to let the bad guys win. Having contracted out law and order to a private security firm helped of course, but soon one thing led to another and the odd car theft, dirty video or bag of white powder speed-boated over from Morocco, resulted in the incineration of five people (during, of all things, a celebration of The Queen's Official Birthday) and Frank Prentice languishing in a Spanish jail.

Along with the early intimation that we are in a kind of time-share Greene-land (reinforced with the description of Estrella de Mar, as "as gaudily wooded and landscaped as Cap d'Antibes", and the theological to-ing and fro-ing over the freedom to commit evil in the service of good) there are also echoes of other Thirties writers in *Cocaine Nights*. Charles is a something of a dissolute Miss Marple conducting his investigations in defiance of the local police in a "halcyon county-town England of the mythical 1930's, brought back to life and moved south into the sun". There's also more than a whiff of Priestley in the communal responsibility, guilt and pride in the activities of the town that effectively mires Charles in his efforts to get at the truth of the allegations made against his brother.

Cocaine Nights is built on a terrific premise and is pitted with stylish detail, but one senses that Ballard, having come up with the idea of the tennis machine, found it something of a chore to spin out this just-about-perfect image to something saleable in hardback at £16.99. But that said, the overwhelming Ballard-ness of it will ensure fans like it and any potential biographers will love it.

Audiobooks



Den Elton's *Popcorn* (Simon & Schuster, 4hrs, £12.99) is a timely and hard-hitting novel, funny and horrific in equal measure, about media violence and abdication from personal responsibility. John Sessions's rendering of its brittle chatshow hosts, self-satisfied movie mogul and insane, oddly puritan, oddly loveable villains is inspired. William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (Penguin, 3hrs,

£7.99) also treats savage innocents, and his writing - economical, immediate and telling - lends itself extraordinarily well to audio. This fresh, dispassionate reading will make a car journey with teenage children pass in a flash, and, with any luck, give them a seductive introduction to a great 20th century novelist.

Christina Hardmyre

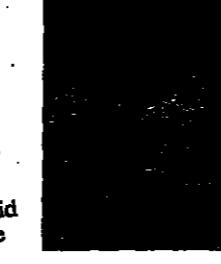
Paperbacks

Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst

Blake by Peter Ackroyd (Minerva, £7.99)

The assiduous Ackroyd has conjured up a wonderful life of the "Cockney visionary", as vivid and sidetic as the work of Blake himself.

Biographer and subject are ideally matched, both ardent believers in the "infinite London" seen within mundane London". This impassioned portrait of an angry, transcendental genius will send enthralled readers to Blake's vast poetic output - but how many will make it to the end of *Vale or the Four Zoas* is a matter for conjecture.

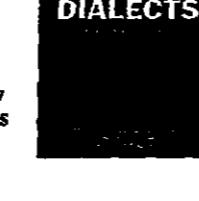


An Atlas of English Dialects by Clive Upton & J.D.A. Widowson (Oxford, £9.99)

An atlas unlike any other, these 90 maps follow the fortunes of words as they are transformed by regional plotlines.

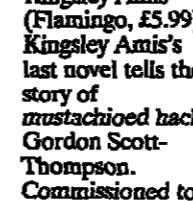
ENGLISH DIALECTS

"Chimley" in the West Country becomes "chimbley" in the Thames Valley, "chimney" in London, "chimney" in the Midlands and "chimay" again in the North. One territorial mutation which gained fame a few years ago is the Lincolnshire "frit". Had Mrs T grown up in the Wilts/Somerset area, she would have bellowed "afeared" at the opposition benches.



The Biographer's Moustache by Kingsley Amis (Flamingo, £5.99)

Kingsley Amis's last novel tells the story of *moustachioed* hack, Gordon Scott-Thompson. Commissioned to write the biography of minor novelist Jimmie Fane, Gordon finds himself drawn into an unexpected affair, and an unfamiliar world of South Kent restaurants and clubs. Puzzled by women, sex and the English class system, he ends up taking refuge in the more reliable pleasures of post-prandial "eructions" and afternoon naps. Not vintage Amis, but not plonk either.



A Spell of Winter by Helen Dunmore (Penguin, £6.99)

An evil governess, a remote country house and an orphaned brother and sister - Helen Dunmore's novel crackles with the best of hoary chestnuts. Frozen in by winter storms, and the stiff conventions of a pre-Great War world, Rob and his gypsy-eyed sister Cathy find release in each other's arms. Tragedy (and distant gun-shots) necessarily ensues. Dunmore has a visceral feel for the landscape and the weather, though is less convincing when it comes to people. First not vintage Amis, but not plonk either.

HELEN DUNMORE

A Spell of Winter

People for Lunch by Georgina Hammick (Vintage, £6.99)

Originally published in the Eighties, Hammick's first collection made the best-seller lists - an unusual fate for a volume of short stories. Now released along with *Spoils*, her second collection, it's good to be reminded what an entertaining writer she is. Adept at prickly old ladies, Hammick also does a good line in the middle-aged, painful story of Maeve and her decision to brave the "Paul Smith shirts" of a "media" Christmas party. A writer as fluent in the language of the suburbs as the shires.



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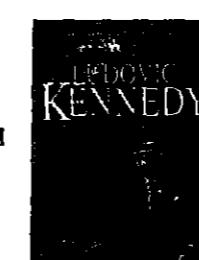
The Oxford Book of Letters edited by Frank and Anita Kermode (£11.99)

This exemplary anthology kicks off with Tudor aristocrats (Elizabeth I twists a mucky general as "Mistress Kitchenmaid"), before moving on to literary bigshots from Johnson to Larkin ("I thought you were pretty charitable about old Dylan, whose letters I read with almost supernatural boredom"). The Kermodes skip D. Thomas but include a 1896 plaint to a US railway: "Yore ruddy tranc...ran over mi bull. He lost his seeds and has nothing left but his poker."



In Bed with an Elephant by Ludovic Kennedy (Corgi, £6.99)

This anecdotal history of Scotland (England is the elephant) is sterling stuff, mercifully free of hoots 'n' toots plaidishness. Bonnie Prince Charlie emerges as an inept commander, keener on bottles than battles. The Calvinist church is damned for its enthusiastic persecution of witches. (But were 4,500 executed? A new study says that only 500 witches were killed in England.) The book warms as Kennedy turns to his heroes, Boswell (a Halpern-style five-times-a-night-man) and philosopher David Hume.



The Blue Jay's Dance by Louise Erdrich (Harper Perennial, £5.99)

Best known for her novel *Love Medicine* (and talking about her Native American ancestry), novelist Louise Erdrich describes her first work of non-fiction as "A Birth Year". Reflections on being pregnant and becoming a mother are recorded alongside notes on the fauna and flora of New England. If the ministrations of Erdrich's New Age husband - his recipes for lemon meringue pie and wild rice casseroles are included - don't make you ill, then her descriptions of episiotomies and epidurals just might.



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gardening

Are you sitting beautifully?

A garden seat shouldn't be rushed into, says Anna Pavord

Sitting is something I do much more in other people's gardens, than in my own. I like the idea of sitting, but somehow it never happens the way it ought to. I take a cup of coffee outside, my sights firmly set on the seat at the bottom of the vegetable patch, but before I'm halfway there I've been distracted by something that needs tying in, or cutting off, or watering. Or else I shoot back inside to look up the name of something I've forgotten. It seems so inhospitable to have things in the garden that you can't say hello to. So by the time I remember what I started out to do, the coffee is cold and the moment for sitting gone.

But a garden seat should be as pleasant to look at as sit on. I like seeing them in the gardens – they give a feeling of restfulness to the place. They are lying through their teeth, of course, but that doesn't matter. The promise is there, of some future time, when I will be able to look for over 30 seconds at a patch of the garden without seeing 10 jobs that need doing.

A seat can work like a big pot or a statue to focus the eye at the end of a view. Or it can be hidden away in a dog-leg corner to make a private retreat in an otherwise too open space. You can combine a seat with a bower, so that wafts of honeysuckle and rose wash over you when you are sitting there. The local blacksmith made us one, five feet wide, six and a half feet high and two feet nine inches deep. The back and sides are covered with one-inch iron mesh, set diagonally so that it makes diamonds rather than squares. The seat is a thick plank of oak which rests on ledges inside the bower.

At one stage, I thought I would let ivy climb up the mesh, so that we would sit in a cave of green, but I went off that idea, because ivy enveloped so many other things in the garden and I began to feel I was drowning in the stuff. A London florist, who came down here to do a wedding, crooned over the ivy as though it were handmade from finest silk. "You don't realise what you have to pay for this in Covent Garden market," he said reprovingly.

That seat is on the bank, set at the only point where there is a view out over the valley to the high ridge beyond. That is another thing about seats. Their positioning must work in two ways. You need to enjoy looking at the seat in its particular niche, but you also need to enjoy looking at whatever is in front of you when you are actually sitting in it.

If you have a tree seat, a circular structure built round the trunk of a tree, you can choose the view according to your mood or the time of day. You need the right kind of free-standing tree to start with, but given that, a tree seat has enormous charm. I've a weak spot for them, because of one that played an important part in the place where I grew up. That was a functional Victorian one, made from flat strips of iron, arranged in concentric circles round a big oak tree. The backrest was made the same way, clasping the trunk too tightly for the tree's good. If you are putting one in place, you need to allow room for the tree's middle-age spread.

Thinking of one for our own garden, I went to see Alex Clive, a 37-year-old farmer who



Alex Clive: a practical man from a practical background

after 10 years running the family's fruit farm, chucked it all in and turned to ironworking instead. I'd seen an intriguing tree seat of his,

the supports made from the spring tines of an old agricultural cultivator. In general form, it followed the lines of the 19th-century

standard design, but the spring tines gave it great personality. And the circles of iron, rather than being concentric, crossed over each other now and then, so that the seat was not mechanical, but curiously like something that was itself alive.

Mr Clive lives with Phoebe Woods-Humphrey in a barn near Newent, Gloucestershire. The yard is a salvage merchant's dream: old rafters and purlins piled up under a cart shed, pieces of plough and harrow stacked against the workshop. Among it all is his own work: a garden arch incorporating the elegantly tapered tines of an old hand-forged garden fork, a garden gate with metal curled as gently as vine tendrils round burnished ball finials. And a quarter of a tree seat.

The idea for this grew out of a seat he and Phoebe designed for a neighbour, who wanted something to complement an old cedar. The trunk was huge, so a full tree seat would have been too massive a structure. Instead, they installed a curving iron bench looking out at the best bit of the view, with the two side supports creeping up the tree trunk like ivy runners.

That seat was designed from scratch, without the starting point of the recycled material that had inspired the seat I first saw. The right kind of scrap is now harder to come by. Farm sales, said Phoebe, are not what they were, even in their untidy bit of Gloucestershire. There's little potential for them in power tools and outmoded Alfa Laval milking machines. On the other hand, they have a fruitful relationship with a nearby scrap merchant. He saves them bed irons and any old tools. They take him copper piping and bits of lead that come their way.

Because he's a practical man from a practical background, you won't find Alex Clive cowering over his joints. He learnt metal-working by fixing harvesting machines. The technique of fixing one thing to another he takes for granted.

He's much more interested in the process of teasing out from customers what they really want and then of making a piece of garden furniture that fits so inevitably into its site, you think it must always have been there. "I'm interested in the way people live," he says. "And in trying to find a happier way for them to be in their houses and gardens." That's a lot of weight for a tree seat to carry. But if you are looking for something special that production-line furniture can't supply, Alex Clive may be your man.

You can find Alex Clive at Ironworks, Hemmings Barn, Paunton, Newent, Gloucestershire GL18 1LU (01531 890268).

Other one-off pieces of garden furniture from: Paul Anderson (01237 441645) – recycled material transformed into elegantly surreal garden furniture. Robert Baulch (01795 521392) – eclectic wooden throne made from grubbed up fruit wood. Nick Parker (01297 489006) – Adirondack-style chairs made from coppiced hazel. Luke Pearson (0171 727 6285) – modern loungers in epoxy coated tubular steel, covered with polyester mesh.



CUTTINGS

Paul Miles has visited over 30 countries, photographing gardens as diverse as ancient ones in China to the futuristic creations of the South American designer, Roberto Burle Marx. On 28 September, at the Museum of Garden History, Lambeth Palace Road, London, he will be giving a lecture "Garden Styles Around the World". For more information phone the museum on 0171-261 1891.

The Great Autumn Flower Show continues today (9.30am-6pm, admission £6.50) and tomorrow (10am-5.30pm, admission £5) at the Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate. Expect dahlias as big as punchballs and a battle between champions to find the heaviest onion.

As part of the celebrations to mark their 50th anniversary, the Northern Horticultural Society is staging an exhibition of garden paintings at the Kentmere House Gallery, 53 Scarcroft Hill, York. It opens next Tuesday and runs until the end of October. The gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday (11am-5pm).

Greenvales Horticultural Supplies is offering gardeners a chance to try Liquid Sod. Enough Liquid Sod to cover 100 square feet costs £14.99. The price includes postage and packing. For supplies contact Greenvales at PO Box 1238, Iver, Bucks SL0 (01895 835235).

WEEKEND WORK

This is a good time to prepare sites for new lawns, to be sown later in September. The earth should be well raked and all clods knocked down with a fork. Prune rambling roses, together with climbers that have only one season of flowering. Keep any new long growths that have sprung from the base of the rose and cut out entirely a few of the old growths that flowered this summer. If no new shoots have appeared, cut out one old growth and prune back side shoots on the rest.

There are several hardy annuals which will make a good show early next year if they are sown outside now in the place where you want them to flower. Sow as thinly as possible, cover lightly with sifted soil and firm down the earth on top of the seeds. Then protect them with netting until the seedlings are established.

Poppies, calendula, larkspur, linaria, love-in-the-mist, clarkia and cornflowers can all be treated in this fashion.

Take cuttings of shrubs such as berberis, phlox and potentilla. They will root most easily in a light mixture of compost and sand or vermiculite. Choose shoots that are six-nine inches long and pull them off the parent bush so each has a bit of a "heel" (part of the older wood) attached.

Bury them about three inches deep and firm the compost down well around them. Cut back chives, marjoram, mint and oregano to about three inches from the ground to encourage fresh growth that you can use during the autumn.

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Photograph: Christopher Jones

Where the army meets the conservationists

Michael Prestage checks out Hankley Moor

As well as being one of Britain's most valuable lowland heathlands, Hankley Moor is also something of a military theme park with the Army using the 7,000 acre site for a wide variety of training uses. On a recent visit to the heathland that is rarer than rainforest and dubbed "the secret of Surrey" by conservationists was playing host to a detachment of the Third Battalion The Parachute Regiment who were practising manoeuvres and training with anti-tank weapons.

Hankley Moor's other, more permanent, guests include rare reptiles like the smooth snake and the sand lizard, uncommon birds like the Dartford Warbler, the Hobby and the Nightjar and the Silver Studded Blue butterfly.

For those keen on modern history, tucked away in a wood is a section of the North Atlantic Wall erected prior to the invasion of Normandy so that explosives experts could determine just what was needed to blow holes in it. For those whose interest in archaeology goes back further, a stone age site was excavated last year.

Dougal Driver, employed by the Ministry of Defence as chief forester on the site, said: "There is not just heath here, but heather, gorse, some woodland and bog. Fortunately, here the needs of the military and keeping the variety of flora and fauna on the heathland are not incompatible. Army officers and conservationists all go away happy."

The thinning of trees to provide less cover for troops also helps the heather. The fire-

breaks that are used as paths by advancing paras also help protect the heath. And even cutting short the cover for a parachute dropping zone has created an area ideal for spiders, including the Raft Spider.

And while in this part of Surrey, heathland has proved irresistible for agriculture or housing over the years the ownership by the MoD that stretches back to the First World War has ensured it has remained largely intact.

There is the possibility that Highland cattle might be introduced to keep down birch and conifer scrub. An initiative already tried at sites where the heath is under threat. But it will be strictly controlled.

However, there are no plans at Hankley to repeat the award-winning scheme at Defence Research Agency land near Farnborough, Hampshire, last year when 200-breed Przewalski's horses were released in semi-wild conditions in preparation for a possible reintroduction into their native Mongolia.

The ecological diversity of Hankley was not lost on the paras taking part in exercises. Lance Cpl Simon Cummins said: "We are given a brief on points of interest and rare or endangered species. Usually we are too busy with the exercise to take notice, but we do have a few guys who are keen and at quiet moments studying what's here passes the time."

The MoD policy is now to encourage public access wherever possible. Some of the tracks being used by the paras are also recognised bridle ways that can be used by local horse riders. There obviously have to be

some constraints for safety reasons but, whenever possible, access is allowed.

Lt Col (ret'd) Bill Briggs, commandant Long Moor training area that includes Hankley Moor, said: "We are surrounded by conurbations where hundreds of thousands of people live cheek by jowl with training areas. There is enormous pressure for recreational access on to training sites and we have to find a middle course between military training and public use."

He said at Hankley the heathland and woodland are kept in balance. The army needs to extend the training area, but it will only be done in consultation with conservation groups. He added that the end of the large-scale use of training grounds in Germany had put additional pressure on UK sites that had to be met, though with as little ecological damage as possible.

Hankley Moor, near the village of Elstead, is the chief rural military training area in the South East of England. In all 290 units of various size use it from the Special Air Service to Army Cadet Forces. Its main use is for small arms firing, infantry tactics and logistical deployments.

It makes up just a small part of the 240,000 hectare MoD estate that has been developed over the last 150 years. Sixty per cent of the country's remaining dry heathland is in the hands of the military.

The MoD's landholding also includes 3,200 separate sites that represent a variety of habitats and it owns the second largest number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest

as well as many ancient monuments.

Since 1974 with the publication of The Nuttall Report there has been a dedicated conservation officer for military land. The role is currently carried out by Col James Baker who explained: "The post evolved in keeping with the change in the national atmosphere towards conservation. The military was in step with the national conscience."

The variety of habitats means the MoD boasts the leading sites for a variety of rare species. The premier bat colony is at RAF Chilmark near Salisbury, Porton Down, Wiltshire, has the leading butterfly site in Britain and also boasts 12 native species of reptiles and amphibians; the most prolific site for the Slender Cotton Grass is at the Ash rifle ranges, near Peribright, Surrey.

The MoD works with conservation groups including officials from English Nature on producing a management plan to ensure the most can be done to protect the sites while acknowledging that military use has to take precedence.

Col Baker said there were instances of the development of firing ranges being moved to protect particular species. This happened at Longmoor in Surrey where the preferred site chosen by experts in small arms fire was on a Natterjack toad spawning ground.

The use of conservation groups has worked well. With heathland we have found that the military and ecological requirements go hand in hand. Other areas have been forested, but you can't train for war in a woodland so what suits us also preserves the heather," he said.

Invasion of the bark beetles

By Helen Lewis

The eight-toothed spruce bark beetle could pose a threat to British forestry comparable to the Dutch elm disease disaster of the 1970s. Already, huge acres of continental forests have been devastated and there are now fears the beetle is poised to commit mayhem in Britain.

Between 1945 and 1949, Germany lost 30 million cubic metres of timber to bark beetles – five times Britain's annual timber harvest. In 1982, the beetle took Sweden. In that year alone, two million hectares of timber were destroyed.

Now this lethal pest is being found in considerable numbers caught in insect traps set by the Forestry Commission at British ports:

"During the last couple of years, numbers of this beetle arriving in Britain have risen to an alarmingly high level," says Roddy Burgess, head of plant health for the Forestry Commission.

It is an international legal requirement that all timber imported into a beetle-free country must be devoid of bark. The concern is with sub-standard pallet imports from the Baltic States arriving at without being debarked. These are often infested with "the most aggressive bark beetle known in Europe", according to the Timber Packaging and Pallet Confederation.

The beetle can only survive in bark – not in finished sawn timber. It could enter Britain lurking in any type of imported timber, from wood shavings used for packing material to wooden crates or even sawn lengths if they still have some vestige of bark on them. And the Forestry Commission doesn't hold out much hope for this country remaining beetle-free for much longer: "It is inevitable that the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle will get a foothold in Britain one day, all we can do is try to put that day off," Burgess says.

The beetle kills trees by boring its way into the bark and setting up a breeding site. This boring action severs the food supply to the tree's root system and – if enough beetles are present – can starve it to death in a matter of a few weeks. However, they can only survive in large numbers. "One insect getting into this country would not survive alone, around 200 are required to form a colony and start killing trees," adds Burgess.

The acreage in danger is phenomenal. Spruce is the most predominant and commercially important species in Britain: 50 per cent of softwood forests are spruce – 800,000 hectares. On the continent, the beetle has also been found living in pine, larch and Douglas fir.

Already its relative is chomping in Britain. The great spruce bark beetle is nowhere near as devastating as its eight-tooth cousin: "We may have the great spruce bark beetle in Britain forever, but we have contained it so far to Wales and bordering counties," Burgess explains.

The spread of this species of bark beetle has been limited because rigorous laws are in place, preventing timber with bark being moved from infested regions to elsewhere in the country. Any trees felled within the contaminated area must only be sawn at an approved mill where the bark can be safely destroyed.

It is thought this beetle started arriving in 1973 but remained undetected until 1982. By the mid-Eighties an insect predator which feeds exclusively on the beetle larva was discovered and released into the infected areas. Tree destruction has been minimal since then.

However, no one has found a way of restraining the eight-toothed beetle. "Once this beetle takes hold it is here for good," warns Burgess. "There is no method of control, the only solution is to remove and destroy infected trees to reduce the numbers of newly emerging beetle larva. Speed will be essential as it can breed three times a year."

Scientists are seeking ways to control the insect should it become established in Britain and timber importation regulations have been tightened. All ships carrying any cargo of soft wood must notify the Forestry Commission three days before docking at a British port. If the timber is arriving from the Baltic States, it is inspected before unloading and, if found to be infested with the beetle, sent straight back.

Tunnicliffe's trove: an artist's life in awe of nature

The peregrine is easily the most glamorous of British hawks. Golden eagles are larger, red kites arguably more graceful; but no other bird can match the peregrine's combination of speed, agility and power. I have never had the luck to see one snatch a pigeon or grouse in mid-air, but several times in the Scottish Highlands, I have watched one slip away from a cliff-face to streak out over the glen, and the sight has always been menacing enough to send a prickle up my spine.

No wonder the species fascinated that great bird artist Charles Tunnicliffe, who died in 1979. Just as the naturalist Frank Fraser Darling spent a whole summer observing a herd of red deer so Tunnicliffe devoted the summer of 1948 to watching and sketching an eyrie at South Stack, on the coast of Anglesey, and now comes a handsome reminder of his obsession in the form of *The Peregrine Sketchbook*.

Tunnicliffe was a big, solid countryman from Cheshire, brought up on a farm and familiar with all aspects of rural life. Yet he was also an extremely professional artist, totally involved in his work. As a young man he illustrated short stories in popular magazines, and collaborated with the authors of over 100 books, among them Henry Williamson on *Tarka the Otter*, and Ernest Hemingway on *The Old Man*



DUFF HART-DAVIS

and the Sea. His wife Winifred – a capable artist in her own right – worked closely with him, and sometimes filled in the background of his pictures.

In 1947, the couple went to live at Shorlands, a house overlooking the Cefni estuary, on Anglesey, and it was there that Tunnicliffe's passion for birds found full expression. He had seen peregrines before, but when, on a visit to cliffs on the north-west of the island, his binoculars revealed a falcon "sitting cosily in a niche surrounded by sea-pinks," he was so thrilled that he went back again and again to watch, sketch and keep an eye on the growing family.

Excitement glows in his diary entries. Of his first visit he wrote, "I lost interest in the razorbills, and guillemots for the time being, and could hardly eat sandwiches because of the peregrine". Three days later,

with the tiercel (male) brooding the nest, he saw the female swoop up and perch on a rock six feet away: "She looked wonderful in her wild garden: her trim, strong shape with its spotted chest, barred breast and flanks, and wide, dark, yellow-ringed eyes, had found a perfect setting".

As always, Tunnicliffe took his sketchbook with him, drawing furiously while he watched through his telescope, and in the evenings he would use his remarkable photographic memory to work up the day's sketches and notes. So was born a series of marvellous paintings. By early August the two chicks had grown into fully-fledged eyasses, and towards the end of the month the whole family had flown the nest.

The fact that the pictures are now appearing for the first time is due to the enthusiasm of the publisher, David Burnett, who met Tunnicliffe in 1978, 18 months before his death. Visiting the old artist at home, Burnett found some "fantastic sketchbooks" in a cupboard, and out of them he created *A Sketchbook of Birds*, which became a major best-seller and went through 135,000 copies.

Supposing that Tunnicliffe had fallen on hard times, because, with Winifred dead, he was living mainly on digestive biscuits, Burnett arranged to pay him £300 a month

out of royalties. Then the artist died, and the publisher, to his chagrin, found that he had had £87,500 in his current account.

With the new book, Burnett has taken enormous trouble to secure the highest possible quality of colour reproduction – and the results are spectacular. Yet the text also carries an important sting in the tail: a description of how peregrines plummeted towards extinction during the 1950s, poisoned by farmers' indiscriminate use of pesticides.

The author of this last section, D A Ratcliffe, was the man who solved the mystery of why the birds had declined disastrously. Several times he saw falcons eating their own eggs, and he was puzzled by this curious behaviour. Then at last, by weighing eggshells, he hit on the reason. Pesticides, ingested through the consumption of birds already dead or dying of poison, had reduced the thickness of the shells by 20 per cent, and so made them unstable.

Now, with the killer chemicals long banned, peregrine numbers in Britain are higher than before the second world war, and this book makes a fitting celebration of their return to power.

The *Peregrine Sketchbook* is published on Monday by Excellent Press at £19.95.

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The thing about...

Vacuum cleaners

Thomas the 'Tank engine' is a bit of a bore, but it is not difficult to believe that a steam locomotive, the most anthropomorphic of all machines, has a personality and might just be able to talk to children when adults are not looking. But, Henry the vacuum cleaner? There must be limits on our childish desire to turn every machine into a human character. Let's face it, vacuum cleaners are very useful, but not exactly a boy or girl's best friend.

If anything, vacuum cleaners were more household demons than pets. The first I can remember was streamlined in a Raymond Loewy kind of way, made a more hellish noise than the souls of the damned, and set the cats spitting, whilst the dogs saw it as a violent intruder that needed a good biting. The next was an Electrolux that lasted until well after I left home.

Since then, I have thought very little about vacuum cleaners. I like to live in homes with floorboards, stone, tiled or granite floors, where a broom and brush and pan will do the work of a vacuum cleaner.

Despite its great age – it dates from around the turn of the century – the electric vacuum cleaner has advanced only very slowly in terms of design and efficiency. For the most part, it's still far too noisy, whilst many blow dust and other particles around the home. Far too many are designed so that as you pull them along, they crash into furniture and get stuck in the jambs of doors. They insist on swallowing objects too big for their serpentine throats. And, for the most part, they come with far too many arcane accessories and ineffable extras.

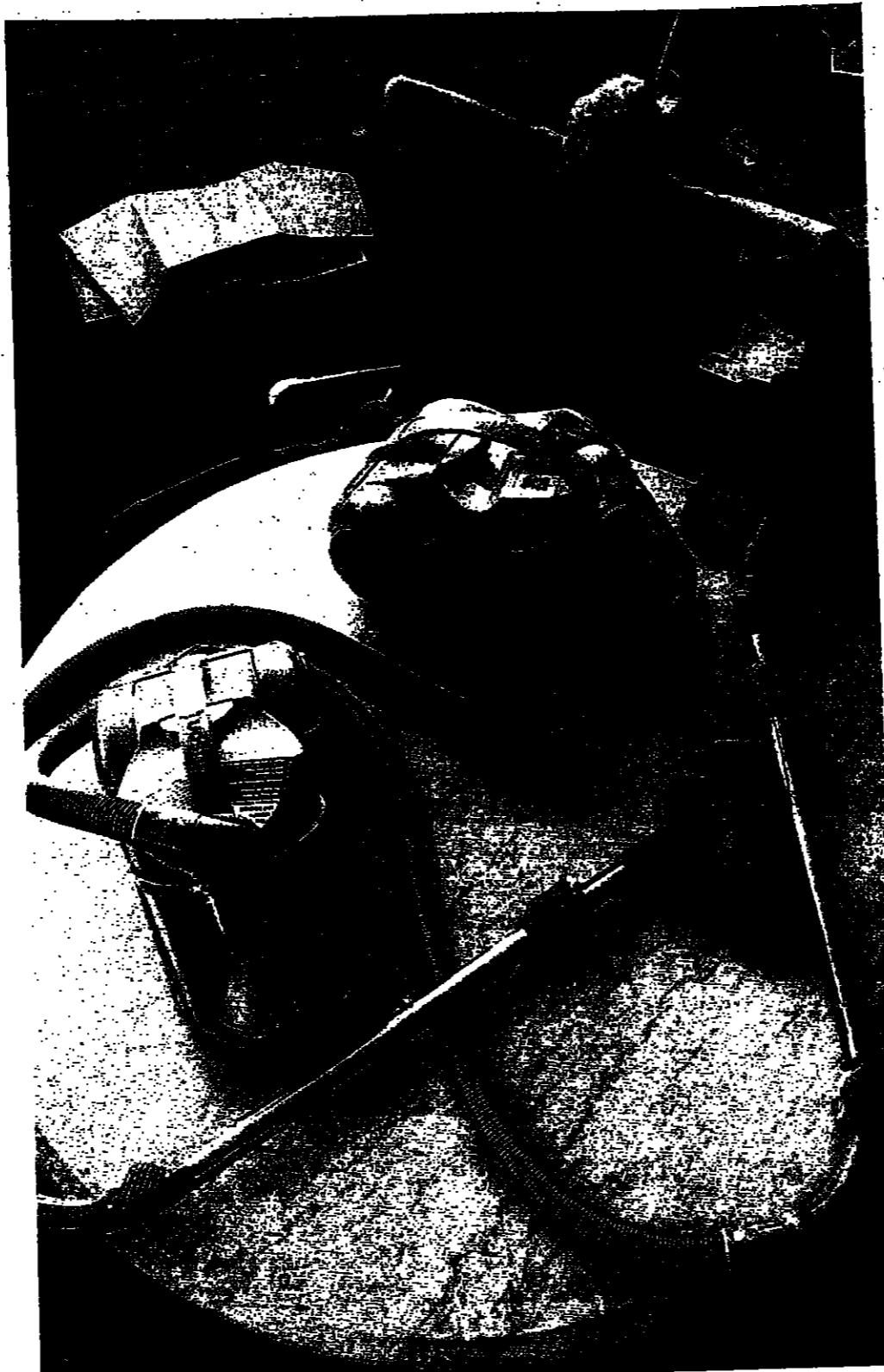
In fact, the best cleaners are those we never see advertised in consumer magazines or sold in the high street. These are industrial vacuum cleaners: rugged, simple aluminium cylinders, or bells, that trundle along on proper wheels and will guzzle up anything from builders' rubble to the dog's collection of Bonio fragments. Of course, these powerful and brutally functional machines will also make quick work of hamsters and gerbils attempting to cross their paths. If they were to be given names, industrial vacuum cleaners would certainly not be called Henry, No. Poi Pot, Stalin or Pinocchio; would be more appropriate: these are domestic Year Zero machines, cleansing everything animate or inanimate in their way.

Despite their ruggedness and efficiency, industrial cleaners appear to have a limited appeal to householders, who really do seem to care about the styling of their vacuum cleaners. The idea of a fashionable vacuum cleaner seems almost absurd, and yet, this is precisely what James Dyson, designer and inventor, has given the world. Dyson cleaners are fine machines and a stylish compromise between the invincible industrial cleaner and the tricky, baggy cleaners that still dominate most domestic appliance showrooms. Let's hope James Dyson is not tempted to start naming his cleaners. Can you imagine a vacuum cleaner called Rosie or Lily?

Jonathan Glancey

Reinventing the vacuum... and cleaning up

Marcus Field meets James Dyson, whose new-look vacuum cleaners became an overnight success, eventually



Dyson and his designs: sucked in by a total fascination

Photograph: John Lawrence

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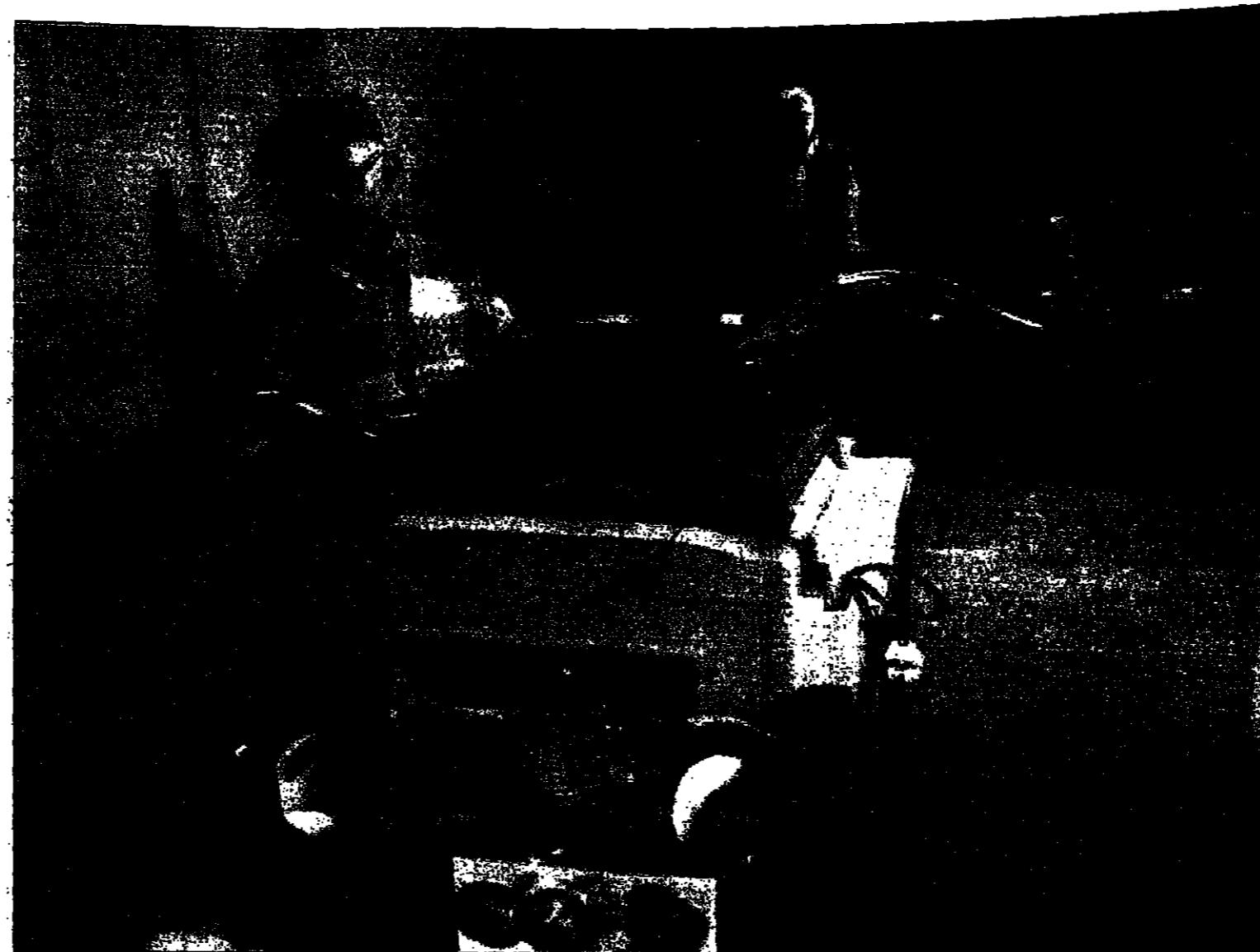
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Going, going... but not quite gone

Tony Kelly visits the spirited world of the country auction



Not a load of old rubbish

Photo: John Lawrence

Lot 17, weighs in at 3.8 kilos, nice bird for the weekend there, got to be worth about four. Three pounds I'll take then. All right, two I'm bid; thank you, Madam. Two twenty, 2.40, 2.60, eighty? Two eighty down in front, three pounds, sir? Three pounds, 3.20, 3.40 I'm bid. Three pounds forty, 3.40, quite sure? Sold on my left at three pounds 40."

If you think it's exhausting to read, you should try being there. This is the world of the country auction, where 15 seconds is all it takes for a turkey to come under the hammer. Cambridge-based auctioneers Cheffins, Grain and Comins have been running such auctions every Thursday for more than 100 years. Until 1988 they were held in Ely's cattle market; when that became a supermarket and a car park, they moved to a council depot in the Fens.

Tom Housden, 84, has worked as a porter for Cheffins for 60 years. "I've been with an auction since I was tall enough to go to market," he tells me as he unpacks a box of marrows, "old maids' comforts" as he calls them with a glint in his eye. "I started in Royston as a ten year old on my father's stall, earning half a crown for a 12-hour day. Nowadays I do it for love because it's my life. In another year or two there'll be nothing like

this left," he adds sadly. "You young people aren't interested - you have it too easy with supermarkets."

But looking around, although the average age is probably 50, I see that at 35 I am by no means the youngest person here.

Lisa Cox has brought her daughter Fiona, 4, in search of second-hand toys and Fiona has spotted a Sindy doll's-house that she wants. But as it is lot number 208, they have a long wait ahead. When you have set your heart on something, there is only one thing to do - decide your price and wait patiently in the right place so that you don't get a rush of blood when the bidding starts.

Anyone can bring anything to be sold here, at commission rates of 15-20%, although most of the household goods come from house clearances.

Looking round the depot, I can't help wondering about the stories of death and divorce and bankruptcy, that these boxes of junk represent. Who would want to sell their collection of Post Office darts trophies? And, more to the point, who would want to buy them? Butchers' scales, a guitar with three strings, an old wooden highchair with a teddy strapped in; things that once meant so much are dispensed within seconds, without emotion.

Unlikely combinations appear. How about two

ironing boards and a satellite dish (they went for £2)? A paddling pool, a child's trolley and a Remington typewriter (£1 the lot)? Or a brand new barbecue, together with a riding saddle, for £3?

But the real action takes place at the food auction, where a crowd of housewives and ruddy Pendle farmers jostle around the trestle tables in search of a bargain. "I just come for the turkeys," says a woman of about 30 beside me. "My mum wants one, my sister wants one, I want one. They're cheap and they're always fresh."

Moments later she is forked out £2 for a 10lb bird (a poultry amount, I am tempted to suggest) and by the time all 60 turkeys have been sold, she has five of them.

Tom Housden has another dozen, which he will sell on to his local old people's home at cost price. "Most of the people in there are younger than me," he says.

Next comes the produce, boxes of strawberries and beetroot, cauliflower and cabbage, grown on local allotments by men in their seventies and eighties. This is where the bidding gets serious - no dealers or car-boot traders here, just housewives haggling over a few pence. Strawberries go for 60p a punnet, spring onions 10p a bunch, leeks 50p for 12, eggs £1.40 for two dozen. Some people leave

with no more than a handful of cabbages, but at those prices and with the fun of a morning out, they still feel the trip has been worthwhile.

And what about Fiona and her Sindy house? It is almost the last thing to be sold and I find myself hoping desperately that she gets it. It's a doddle - the car-boot people are reluctant to deny a little girl her treat and Lisa gets her prize for just £12.50. It's taken all morning but it's probably the only way she'd ever have got it.

Next year the auction will move to a new site at Sutton, and auctioneer Philip Ambrose fears that European hygiene laws might mean the end of the produce sale. The household auction will continue, but without the turkeys and the tomatoes it will lose a lot of its character. So is Tom Housden right when he says that country auctions are an endangered species? "I hope not, but I fear he is," says Ambrose. "We only make a modest profit but I want to go on doing it. After all, we've been doing it for a hundred years. It's tradition."

Auction every Thursday morning at Portley Hill depot, Ely Road, Littleport, Cambs. Viewing from around 9am, produce sale from 10.30am, household sale from 11.00am. Details from Cheffins, Grain and Comins (01353 662266).

Where to find your nearest country auction

Green Slade Hunt Fine Art: A weekly sale of general & household effects is held at the Produce Hall of the Taunton Market Site on Wednesdays at 10am, with viewing from 2.30-5pm the day before. There are between 600-800 lots each week and it is a sale for "everybody looking for anything". Lots, ranging from china and glass to the contents of a garden shed, go from £1 up to thousands. Call Green Slade Hunt Fine Art 01823 332525.

John Francis Auctions: Lots range from pots and pans to genuine Welsh Dresses. Held at the Tyf Hall, Llandyfyl, Dyfed on Tuesdays every two to three months. Prices range from £1-£5,500. Call John Francis Auctions: 01559 363401.

South East Marts Guildford Market: From livestock to household items, tools and plants, the Tuesday auction at Styfield Green in Guildford has something for everyone. Viewing starts at 7am and the sale kicks off with livestock at 9.30am, followed by household items at 10.30am. Prices go from £2 to over £100. Call 01483 573386/447600.

Arrow Auctions: The auction at Bart Lees Road, Washford near Redditch opens every Tuesday (6pm) and Thursday (11am) and it's one of the biggest you'll find. Tuesdays are geared towards household goods and Thursdays you can pay anything from £2-10,000 as the lots include farm machinery, office furniture and catering equipment. Call 01527 517707.

Kidderminster Market Auctions: Everything from bric-a-brac to fresh produce is sold at the three sales held each Thursday at Coberton Hill market, opposite the Farmer's Boy pub. Sales start at 10.30am, with produce and bric-a-brac, 12.00am for carpets, 2-2.30pm furniture. Viewing for furniture starts on Wednesday, 4pm-7pm and from 9am on the morning of the sale. For carpets and fresh produce, viewing is from 9am on the morning of the sale only. Call 01562 741303.

Nock Deighton Agricultural Auction: Starting at 11am on Mondays at Bridgnorth Market in Taseley, Bridgnorth. Viewing starts at 9am and items for sale include livestock, fresh produce, plants, poultry and clothing. Call 01746 762666.

Ross-on-Wye Produce Sale: For plants, vegetables or eggs by this regular auction at the Ross-on-Wye Livestock Centre, Overross on Tuesdays from 10.30. Viewing from the time produce starts rolling up - 4am. Call 01989 762225.

Rhiannon Batten

THE INDEPENDENT

INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY

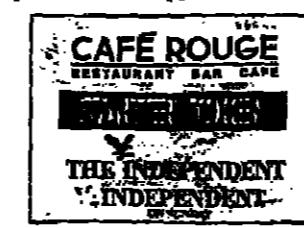
Lunch for £5, Dinner for £10 at CAFÉ ROUGE



Starting next Saturday, The Independent and Independent on Sunday invite you to enjoy a taste of culinary France. We have joined forces with Café Rouge, the restaurant chain that offers straightforward French cooking at value for money prices, to bring you an exclusive offer - the chance to sample a selection from the brand new Café Rouge autumn menu, at a special price. Together with a friend you can enjoy a two course lunch for just £5, or a three course evening meal for just £10. Both prices include coffee and service. Simply collect three differently numbered tokens to participate in our offer.



Today we are printing a Starter Token to get you on your way. It can be used as any numbered token. For further tokens and full details of this great offer, pick up a copy of The Independent on 21 September and the Independent on Sunday on 22 September. Bon appetit!

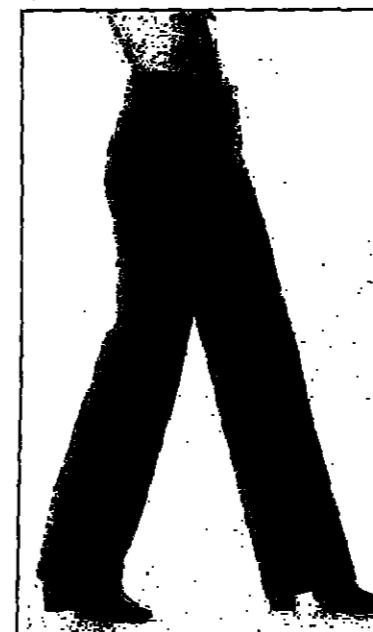


Six of the best bootleg trousers



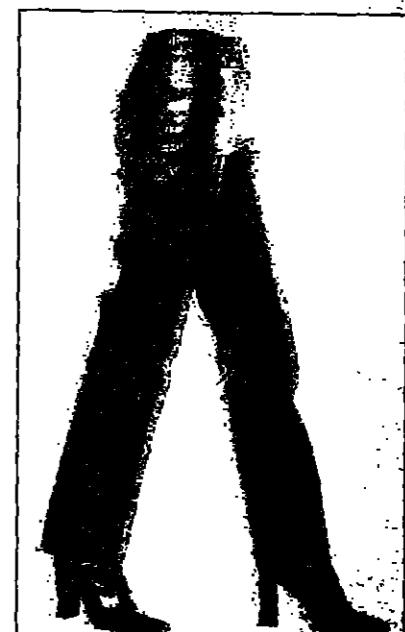
1 Tan suede bootleg trouser, £80, by Miss Selfridge, available from 221-223 Oxford Street, London W1, 14-22 Lands Lane, Leeds. Call 0181-910 1100.

2 Purple suede bootleg trouser, £80, by Warehouse, available from 19-21 Argyll Street, London W1. 7 Cathedral Walk, St Davids Centre, Cardiff. Call 0171-278 3491.



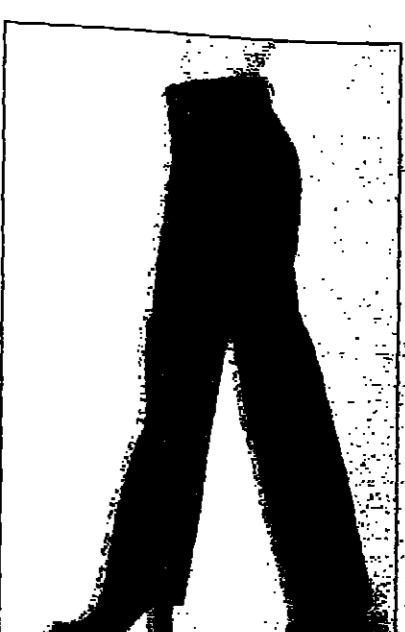
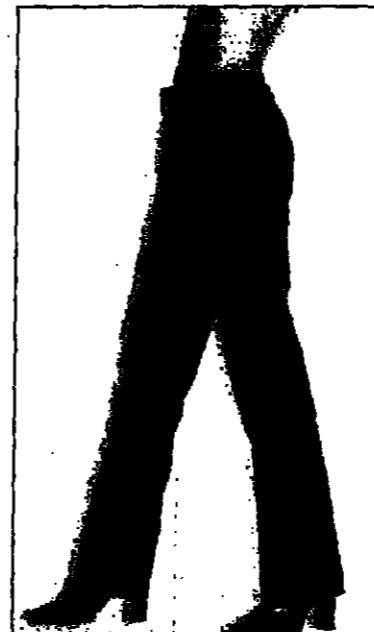
3 Grey flannel trouser £145 by Joseph, available from Joseph, 26 Sloane Street, London SW1. Hobo, 18 Abbeygate, Grimsby, South Humbershire. Call 0171-629 4774.

4 Tweed flat-fronted bootleg trouser, £130 by ICB, available from Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1. Selfridges, Oxford Street, London W1. Call 0171-823 1145.



5 Chocolate mock-leather trousers, £39.99 by Oasis, available from 292 Regent Street, London W1. 7 Arndale Centre, 35 Market Street, Manchester.

6 Poly-cotton black bootleg trouser, £47, by Jigsaw, available from 126-61 Buchanan Street, Glasgow. Call 0171-491 4484.



Same boots used throughout by Bertie £85. Call 0171 9352002. Stylist: Charlie Harrington. Photographs: Tony Buckingham

هذا من الأصل

'I have seen the future of fun. And it works. Sort of'

Simon Calder joins the (pretty long) queue for London's latest high-tech attraction

On the map of the world that every cheap thrill-seeker carries around in her or (more likely) his head, London has just been catapulted from nowhere to the premier league of theme-park venues. Ever since Battersea Funfair closed down a generation ago, packaged fun has been largely absent from the capital. But with its new high-profile, high-voltage presence at the London Trocadero, Segaworld aims to turn the theme-park world upside-down virtually overnight.

The word "virtually" is used advisedly. Theme parks devour cubic metres, consuming space with ever more extravagant rollercoasters. Why not, went the thinking at the Japan HQ of computer games company Sega, create an inside-out thrill palace? The cutting edge of technology can carve out a new universe where nothing is quite as it seems. Imagination supersedes engineering; electronic introspection replaces the extrovert exploration of g-forces. That is the premise behind the most significant addition to London's tourist stock of the Nineties: the creation of Europe's only virtual reality theme park in the heart of the capital, a couple of hundred yards from Piccadilly Circus. I have seen the future of fun, based on the silicon chip, and it works. But only sort of.

The term "upside-down" is used advisedly, too. I spent (too) much of Monday evening in an inverse position, zapping aliens while I dangled from the discomfort of the R360. This miracle of gadgetry comprises a kind of tumble drier cranked up to human size. You are strapped in, instructed to take off from an illusory aircraft carrier and shoot down as many of the enemy as possible in four minutes while rotating rapidly around an axis or three. Too late, I realised that the 360 indicates the number of degrees you pass through. But then, the theme of virtual mayhem reverberates throughout each of the seven levels of Segaworld.

The other motif is queuing. At the ground-floor entrance, I lined up for five minutes to hand over the steep £12 admission. The wait provided a chance to assess my fellow thrill-seekers. Whatever Sega may have anticipated as its target market, the majority of people queuing at teatime on Monday were in their early twenties. They were overwhelmingly male. And intimidatingly tall: at six-foot-two (183cm), I was the shortest person in the line.

Height becomes an important issue when deciding how much you pay – and what attractions you are allowed on. You have to be at least 110cm (3ft 7in) to use most of the rides, and 130cm (4ft 3in) for the best experience in the whole place, my inverting friend R360.

Altitude does not discriminate against the sensory overload, which begins as soon as you enter the atrium with a dazzling and deafening explosion of light and sound. Tardis technology has evidently been employed to expand the old shell of the Trocadero by a dimension or two, and the effect is startling. You leave the ordinary tourist several floors below, and ascend to the top of the Troc by means of two exaggerated escalators, feeling like an extra in *Bladerunner*, while a battle of neon and laser, glass and steel is fought around you.

Then it all starts going awry. I waited half-an-hour (not the promised 15 minutes) for a close encounter with the Beast in Darkness. At the front of the queue, a cheerfully theatrical Sega operative warns you that a murderous monster was on the loose. He demands to know if you are truly brave or merely stupid. After a pulse-pumping walk through a compendium of



The public face of Segaworld. The other motif is queuing

scarsiness (including trudging across something that feels suspiciously like industrial Play-Doh), you climb aboard a moving chair.

With that thrillseeker's rush of excitement mixed with a gnawing queasiness, I tensed in expectation of virtual terror. It never arrived. The aimless three-minute trundle around a small, dark chunk of London WC2 was not so much *thrill interruptus* as virtual impotence.

I suspected a teething problem with the machinery. "My screen's not working – I couldn't see anything apart from the exit signs.

"You're not supposed to," explained a vaguely ghostly voice in a yellow T-shirt. "It's an audio experience."

What I thought was, "You mean I waited 30 minutes for that pathetic collection of sub-Radiophonic Workshop sound effects? You're taking the mick."

What I said was, "Oh."

Your slow descent back to ground level employs a labyrinth of junior escalators, designed to lead you through what I suspect is the financial *raison d'être* of Segaworld. Your £12 investment (£9 for under-16s) entitles you to use the half-dozen rides as often as you like, or have the patience to queue for. But there are hundreds of other, smaller machines for which you have to pay per play.

The first stop is a gallery called the Combat

Zone: basically a well-to-do amusement arcade, where the deadly serious business of zapping aliens can be carried out on a dozen all-flashing, all-beeping machines. Last Monday evening, you could exterminate invaders all night for free. But setting all the machines to Free Play appears to have been an introductory offer. Once the opening honeymoon is over, five minutes of miscellaneous massacre will cost £1.

Onwards and downwards. The waiting time for *Aqua Planet* ("a 3D interactive motion adventure") was showing 45 minutes. I calculated this would devour far too much of the four hours that Sega reckons you need for the whole theme park. The queue for the adjacent Space

Photographs: John Lawrence

Mission was a more modest half hour. So I joined it.

Forty minutes later, I was strapped in and ready to go. Thirty people at a time are loaded into spaceships and equipped with wraparound headsets. This was what I was waiting for – an exploration of the final frontier in fun, where a clever combination of screens and sounds persuades you that you are the rear gunner for an intergalactic spaceship. After a bit of jogging around and some unconvincing visual effects, I was still frustrated. The impression must have been much the same when television was invented. You are thrilled that the thing exists, but wish it could work a jolly sight better.

And another thing: why do you always end up shooting aliens? Parents need not be particularly pacifist to fret about the emphasis on electronic violence, and the parallel implication of indestructibility. I laughed my disoriented socks off when I crashed the R360 tumble-drier on landing, and emerged with no more damage than an overextended grin. On the Race Track level, I did dozens of laps of the Isle of Man TT Circuit, racing virtually around a high-powered motorbike. Given that I am shaky enough on a bicycle, I inevitably crashed once a circuit or so. After a bit of bi-watt hyperactivity on the part of the machinery, you land safely back on the saddle and roar off once more. If that is the message that 17-year-olds are picking up, God help them should they buy their first Honda and expect the same degree of forgiveness on the roads of the real world.

This worry is not restricted to Segaworld, of course, since similar machines can be found in amusement arcades all over the country. Sega-world's Unique Scaring Proposition rests with the big rides, like the Ghost Hunt. The good news is that there is no queue. The bad news is that this ghost train ride to nowhere is about as scary as Thomas the Tank Engine in a mild grump.

By now you are running out of time and patience. So you pin your hopes for being terrified on the Mad Bazaar. But the 30-minute wait for it just makes you mad when you realise that these "Hyper Battle Carts" are dressed-up dodgems, and not as much fun as the ones at Butlin's in Bognor either – despite the electrone chance to destroy your fellow dodgers.

All that zapping makes you hungry, so it was something of a relief to find McDonald's (and I never thought I would ever write that). Equally pleasing is the discovery that a Big Mac, fries and Coke weighs in at £2.88, exactly the same as outside on Shaftesbury Avenue. Don't try this immediately before another tumble-drying, alien-blasting session on the R360, though.

The Segaworld staff were uniformly helpful and friendly, including the chap at the exit who was conducting a satisfaction survey. No, I probably would not return. An upside-down glance at his survey results so far revealed that I shared the majority view.

"Try telling your brain it's not real," goes the Segaworld slogan. Don't worry – your empty wallet will assure you that it is all too genuine. I hoped £12 would buy things that made me go "Wow". Instead, I mostly found stuff that made me say "Oh".

Those cheap thrills are just too expensive.

Segaworld is at the Trocadero, on Coventry Street just east of Piccadilly Circus. It is open from 10am to midnight, daily except Christmas Day. Over-15s pay £12, children 15 and under pay £9.

'It was fantastic. Except for Noddy and Big Ears'

I had been waiting for Segaworld to open for ages, ever since I saw stuff about it in my comic. I've got a Sega Mega Drive and a Mega CD and I love Sonic the Hedgehog – he's the top Sega character.

I went with mum and dad last Saturday to the grand opening, the day before it was opened to the public. We got in free and all the rides and games were free too.

It was absolutely fantastic, except for the Noddy and Big Ears characters, who were wandering around trying to hug everyone.

When you go up huge escalators, past cinema-sized TV screens all linked together with video songs trying to burst your ear drums. It looks like a futuristic highway, 200 years in the future.

There are several different floors with games like you get in amusement arcades. But the rides were extremely lame, not scary or exciting.

There were long queues for all of them and they are not worth queuing for. And the queues hardly seemed to move, unlike at



Walt Disney World, where you keep moving and it doesn't seem to take very long.

I played a preview for a new Sonic game for the Sega Saturn. It's the first three-dimensional Sonic game yet. That was great fun.

The best game of all was a touch-sensitive

one on a screen where bugs crawled very quickly out of cracks and quickly went back. You kill the bugs by getting a play hammer and hitting the TV screen. The touch sensitive screen senses where the hammer hits and kills the bugs. We played this for ages because it was such fun. I got the highest score of the day.

We spent four hours there and it wasn't enough really because of all the queuing. You need to spend about five or six hours there, I think, to enjoy Segaworld to the max.

Segaworld was only free for us because we were at the special preview. Normally you have to pay £12 to get in if you are 16 or over and £9 if you are 15 or under. And then you pay for the games on top of that. It is very expensive. The best tactic is to decide how much you are going to spend before you go and stick to that figure – like you do at a fair – otherwise you could end up poor!

Michael Berliner (aged 10½)

ARE WE NEARLY THERE?

Everything that follows is of restricted growth, the kind of minimalist attractions that make a toddler feel like Gulliver among the Lilliputians instead of (as usually happens with children among adults) like Gulliver among the Brobdingnagians.

Music in Miniature, Albion Road, Robin Hood's Bay, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO22 4SH (01947 880512). As a hobby, music teacher Patricia Labistour began making 1/5-scale models of musical instruments. Now she is 400; the result of 15 years work. Arranged in 50 dioramic (three-dimensional) settings, they illustrate the history of music-making, from cavemen with harps made of animal bones to a recording studio in outer space (where there are no neighbours to annoy). Music lovers

who come range from children to adult education classes. Open daily 11am to 5pm. Entrance: £1 (Children 50p).

Queen Mary's Dolls' House, Windsor Castle, Berks SL4 1JN (01753 831118). Also built to 1/5-scale but in this case by 1,000 craftspersons. The doll's house was designed by Sir Edward Lutyens for Queen Mary in the 1920s. Open daily 10am-4pm (10am-3pm from November) except when Castle is in use for adult functions. Admission includes full-size State Apartments etc. £9.50 (£5.50 child). Legoland Windsor, Winkfield Road, Windsor, Berks (0990 626375). The Miniland section consists of scenes from Europe, constructed of 20,000,000 Lego bricks they depict minuscule Romeo climbing a wall to get at

his diminutive Juliet. On a larger scale and of more substantial materials, there are cars children can learn to drive. Open 10am-6pm daily until 29 September, then weekends and half-term until the end of the season on 27 October. Adult £15 (£12 child).

The Borrowers' Village, Birmingham Botanical Garden, Westbourne Road, Edgbaston (0121 4541860). Open 9am-7pm (Sunday 10am-8pm). £3.50 (£3.80 on Sundays). £1.90 child. Bekonscot Model Village, Warwick Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2PL (01494 672919). The grand-daddy of small-town planning, this flung open its miniature doors in 1929. The tiny time-warp features houses, castle, cricket match and minuscule maze, as well as a gauge 1 railway. Closes

at end of October, opens in February. £3.20 (child £1.60).

Mullacott Miniature Ponies, Mullacott, Ilfracombe, Devon (01271 866877). A large herd, from minimalist equine creatures to really heavy horses. There are rides – on saddle or in dry. Open daily until end of October. £3.95 (£2.75).

Dolls' House Fair and Teddy Bear Fair, Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, London N22 4AY on 9 and 10 November. Two separate events, organised by the publishers of *Teddy Bear Scene* and *The Dolls' House Handbook*, held primarily for (allegedly) grown-up collectors but children of eight and upwards are welcome, too. All details from EMF Publishing, 7 Ferringham, Ferring, West Sussex BN12 5ND (01903 506626).

at

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE

For 30 years, he ran the world's most feared network of spies. And he's still at

large.

Leslie Colitt reveals the secrets of the man said to have inspired John le Carré's

Karla



Age of innocence – or age of delinquency? Few subjects divide opinion so ferociously as childhood. Blake Morrison searches for truth among the myths

Plus: Helen Fielding indulges her appetites, Michael Bywater indulges his, and Robert Cushman gets to the bottom of Harold Pinter



Photograph: John Lawrence

The New Forest: no promises about trees

Simon Calder cycles the Royal hunting ground of the New Forest

Autumn is irrelevant for most of the New Forest. That is not so much because stubbornly evergreen conifers have overtaken the deciduous varieties, it is ravaged by foresters, disease and hurricane. It is more because much of the New Forest is actually an ancient and mostly treeless heath. So the best way to tell that August has finally yielded to September is to look at the traffic. The dreary, nose-to-tail summer convoy of sightseers has receded, leaving southern England's improbably expansive wilderness wonderfully empty. In autumn, you can see the absence of wood for the tourists.

We commoners can thank William I for its creation, and his successors to the monarchy for its survival. In 1079 the Norman conqueror named the "Nova Foresta" as the first royal reserve. The term "forest" denoted an expanse of land appropriated by the Crown; it made no promises about the existence of trees. Rather, the word implied good hunting grounds. A parcel of land between Winchester and the coast was given over to satisfying His Majesty's pleasure and supplying fresh meat for the royal table.

The New Forest was hardly a serfs' paradise. William I invoked all kinds of cruel laws to preserve deer for the royal chase. Woe betide any dog that could not pass through a catflap-sized piece of ironwork; any too large had their claws removed to prevent them harming the deer. Fences which impeded the deer were forbidden. A local who killed a deer was himself executed.

To enable some sort of living to be scraped by the people, an arcane set of laws was imposed. These survive today and are couched in Norman legalese. The forest boundary is officially the "perambulation"; a "Commoner" is someone who, by virtue of owning a particular piece of land, enjoys "rights of common" – so his or her pigs may forage for acorns, for example. Land use disputes are settled by the Court of Swainmote, which sits six times each year. Its members are known as Verderers, the traditional guardians of the forest. But at the top of the tree, so to speak, is the Queen. When not opening hospitals and mediating in Windsor family disputes, Her Majesty's other job is Surveyor of the New Forest.

New Forest: the essential guide

New Forest Cycle Experience (01590 624204) is opposite the main entrance to Brockenhurst station. It opens 9.30am-5.30pm daily. A bike costs £9 a day.

Beaulieu Abbey, Palace House and National Motor Museum (01590 612123). Open daily 10am-6pm except Christmas Day. Adults £8, children £5.50, £2.50 family rate for two adults and up to four children. Call for details of special pre-Christmas festivities.

You are unlikely to bump into the patrolling monarch during your perambulations. Divert from the main roads, though, and you will meet dozens of fellow explorers. In the Nineties, the standard breed is no longer the lean, gentle New Forest pony but the mountain bike. Woodland tracks are a-swish with shiny bicycles, most equipped with trillions of gears despite the absence of mountains taller than 130ft.

To join them, just head for Brockenhurst. In 1847, the railway arrived in the New Forest and brought the first non-royal tourists. The town grew into a modest straggle of red-brick cottages, many of them decked in hanging baskets resembling miniature Monet masterpieces.

Brockenhurst is hemmed in from the wilderness beyond by a variety of impedimentia: cattle grids, the railway line and a genuine ford through which Escorts and Mondeos splash today. An inventory of the amenities of this creamy oasis does not take long: a football ground with a far-from-grandstand, a pub called The Snacketer, celebrating one "Brusher" Mills, who swept up adders from the surrounding heathlands and sold them to London Zoo for a shilling each as fodder for exotic snake-eating animals, and a travel agent with the name (rather racy for this part of Hampshire) of Egyptian Encounter.

More importantly, opposite Brockenhurst station is a cycle shop where you can pick up a suitably spiffy bike and

Maritime Museum, Bucklers Hard (01590 616203). Open 10am-6pm daily, until the end of October when closing time moves forward to 4.30pm. Adults £2.90, children £1.95, pensioners £2.40.

New Forest Museum, High Street, Lyndhurst (01703 283914). Open 10am-6pm daily. Adults £2.50, children £1.25, pensioners £1.65, £5.50 for two adults and up to four children.

maps of the forest trails. Within a couple of minutes, you can be scrunching along avenues of slender, handsome trees that cast Impressionistic stripes across the dappled gravel. Soon, though, the ancient track emerges on to the more typical New Forest terrain of Beaulieu Heath. The only notable vegetation comprises grizzled old shrubs sprouting from tough heathland. The relentless gloom of the earth is relieved by brash violet shreds of heather. Wild ponies snuffle around this beautifully bleak pasture, the silence pierced by the caws of stern crows – and the drone of aircraft arriving from the Channel Islands to Southampton airport, which reminds you that the south coast's biggest city is only five miles away.

As Beaulieu Heath descends to Beaulieu village, the comfort index increases. It peaks at Palace House, global headquarters for the Montagu family, a dynasty that has lived at Beaulieu since 1538 and made this corner of the New Forest its own (see Jon Winter's story, opposite).

Nowhere else where can you be engrossed in the Sparkling Plug Story (sponsored by Champion) moments after leaving the ruins of the largest Cistercian abbey in England. The old refectory is now the parish church, probably the only one in Britain served by monorail. Last weekend worshippers found themselves in uncomfortable proximity to Autojumble, a motor accessories show. Linguistic purists

might approve of a car boot sale where you could actually buy a car boot, but I shook off the chrome and took the Solent Way. This long-distance footpath wobbles endearingly through the New Forest. It ushers you through Keepers Copse, downstream beside the dreamy Beaulieu River. Soon you stumble upon a tidy village that once helped Britannia rule the waves. Two rows of cottages tumble down to the waterside, on either side of a broad green occupied by a colony of overfed mallards.

Bucklers Hard came into existence when the priorities of royalty changed. As the world grew more complex, economic and military domination acquired more importance than fresh venison. The Navy needed big ships, quickly. As with any industry, it was easiest to put the shipbuilders in close proximity to the raw materials. Oak was plundered to create vessels of war, the grandest of which was Nelson's *Agamemnon*.

The greatest work was by Henry Adams, who accordingly lived in the grandest residence. He occupied the Master Builder's House throughout the second half of the 18th century, and was responsible for much of the fleet that won the Battle of Trafalgar. His home is now a hotel, and half the cottages in the village are exhibits rather than dwellings.

Inevitably, Bucklers Hard is part of the Montagu empire. For a time its name was changed to Montagu Town, but reverted to the original after the second Duke lost public favour in an abortive slaves-for-sugar swap with the Caribbean island of St Lucia.

Press on south, and the New Forest reveals another face: rolling meadows and benign pastures. That has been good farming land for centuries becomes startlingly clear when you turn a corner by St Leonard's Grange and almost collide with medieval tithe barn. Its dodder stonework has been sheltering grain and livestock for almost as long as the New Forest has existed.

The middle distance is occupied by the Solent, a swathe of inky water on which the last of the summer dinghies dance. Beyond it, the woodland of the Isle of Wight is turning a distinctly scarlet shade of green.

Autumn has arrived there – but not here.

Six of the best New Forest hotels

Cloud Hotel, Meerut Road, Brockenhurst (01590 22165). Charming setting facing open heathland. Double rooms: £58.

The Cottage Hotel, Sway Road, Brockenhurst (01590 22292). Just six rooms, costing £56-80.

Watersplash Hotel, The Rise, Brockenhurst (01590 22344). Victorian house with a modern annexe. Double rooms: £76.

New Park Manor, Lyndhurst Road, Brockenhurst (01590 22467). Former royal hunting lodge set in formal gardens. Double rooms: from £114.

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Four wheels and a mansion keep Lord Montague rolling

John Winter visits Beaulieu

If you intend to set up in the leisure industry, it is clearly advantageous to inherit nearly 7,000 acres of the New Forest. "Give the public a decent cup of tea and good toilets and they will be happy," Lord Montagu of Beaulieu wrote after assuming responsibility for the family estate. But he has added considerably more than WCs and refreshment facilities to the Forest's natural attractions to entice a steady flow of visitors.

Getting there, though, can be a problem. Travelling by car seemed the most practical way of reaching Lord Montagu's portion of Hampshire, especially when the alternative was taking a train to Southampton and then a bus on to the village. But after lurching through traffic jams, I arrived in a state of mild road rage.

Thankfully, the village of Beaulieu is a very relaxing place, resting on the banks of a river where the water forms an attractive pool before spilling over a weir and heading for the sea. It is tiny, just a few streets with a pub and a row of shops crammed with assorted souvenirs.

It's just a short stroll across the road and round the pond to the entrance of Lord Montagu's family home and his main attractions. An elementary manoeuvre you might imagine, but a perilous one in Beaulieu where the amount of traffic on the roads is wholly disproportionate to the size of the village.

Having survived this experience, you enter a theme park conceived by an English aristocrat using Disneyland principles. The result is a kind of Beaulieu-world, where the 16th-century Palace House is authentic, and the white-knuckle roller-coaster has become a sedate monorail floating visitors over Victorian gaudiness, past ancient monastic ruins and through an extraordinary collection of vehicles housed in the National Motor Museum.

Most people head straight for the cars, but the Montagu family home and the ancient Abbey ruins are well worth a detour. The Montagus have lived at Palace House since the early 16th century – but to make way for tourists, the family has decamped to private quarters in the

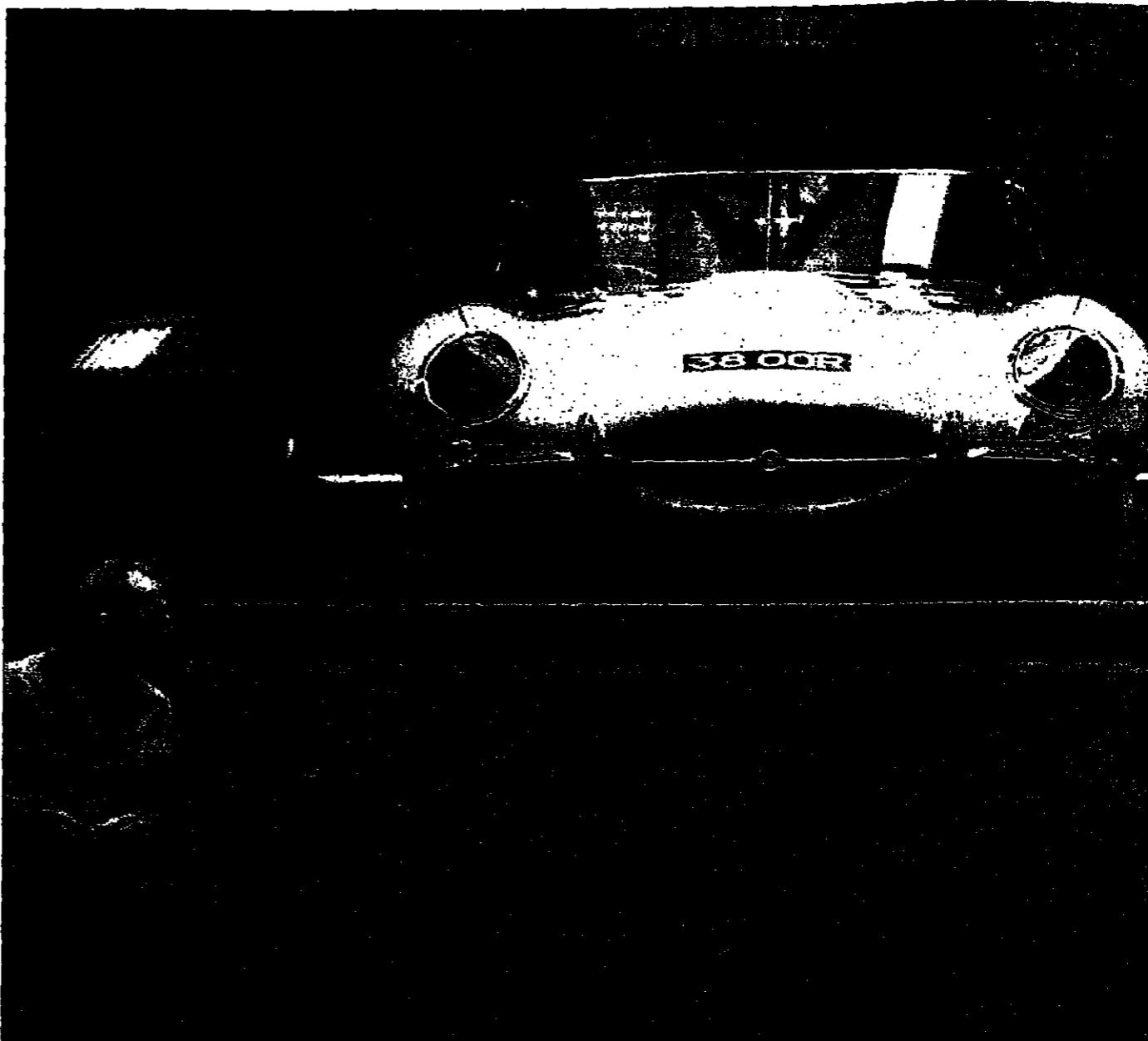
Victorian wing. Visitors are therefore left to admire unhampered the splendour of the elegant rooms, tastefully embellished with stone-vaulted ceilings and fine masonry around the windows and fireplaces. The only distraction is the odd member of staff dressed in period costume as part of the Living History Interpretation Programme.

Your £8 admission to the grounds also gets you into the National Motor Museum, a quick monorail hop away. Anyone who has ever looked wistfully at an old Model-T or Morris Minor will be drawn to the wedge-shaped hall, containing a stationary history of motorised transport. From the vivid red of an old post-office van to the deep ultramarine of Bluebird, the story of the car is glorified by a symphony in chrome and wax polish. Wherever you stand in the museum, it is hard to avoid your attention being drawn by the absurdly sleek curves of Bluebird – once the fastest machine on earth.

The late Donald Campbell used this extravagance of horse power to break the world land speed record, a superlative that has remained in British hands more often than not since the birth of the motor car. The impending battle to be first to break the sound barrier at ground level gives an extra twist to the old newsreel footage of previous attempts.

You come away from the Museum with the distinct message "four wheels good". So anyone who thinks that, perhaps, the internal combustion engine is not the only solution to the transportation conundrum, may not have a pleasant afternoon here.

In some ways it would have been nice if Lord Montagu had kept to his early belief and just provided that decent cup of tea, those good toilets and let the attractions speak for themselves. But while a monorail, employees dressed in period costume, boxes of Beaulieu chocolate and jars of Beaulieu jam may not be to everyone's taste, they take nothing away from his aim to provide "a good day out for the family". Ironically, if anything spoils Beaulieu it is the huge numbers of that four-wheeled contraption we call the car.



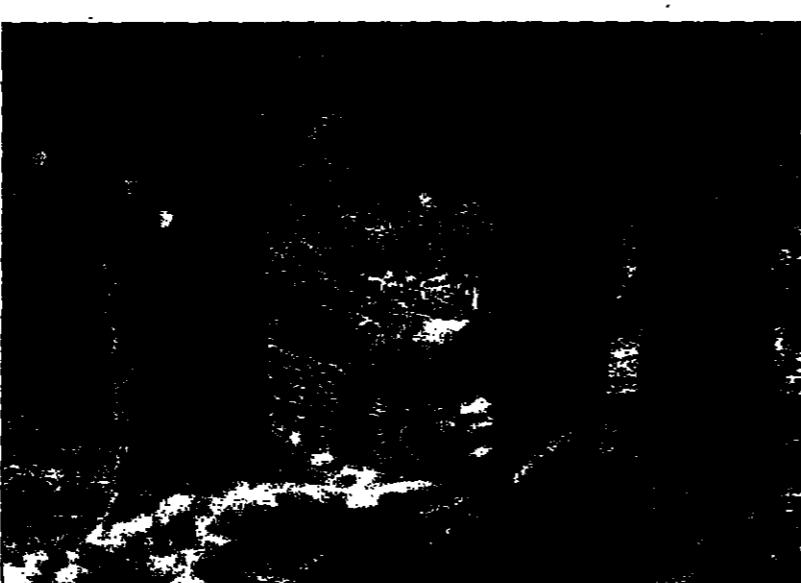
Fighting for Hampshire's Green and Pleasant land

Simon Calder on the quangos that look after the New Forest

What is the best way to look after our most ancient tract of organised wilderness? Nine hundred years after it first became subject to the whim of William I, the New Forest has somehow survived as part of the natural heritage. Progress has left it only slightly bruised, with late 20th-century roads responsible for most of the scar tissue. The fact that half of the Forest is owned by the Crown helps, but controls are essential to prevent unrestrained development in the remainder of the area. It is a Good Thing, we all agree, to preserve a priceless piece of countryside. But getting to grips with the labyrinthine bureaucracy that seeks to protect the New Forest proves tougher than scrambling through the wildest heathland gorse.

The government has defined a New Forest Heritage Area, and applied to it the wonderful Whitehall-woolly phrase "An Area of National Significance". Two years ago, the Environment Minister, Robert Atkins, decided against making the New Forest a fully-fledged national park. Instead, the area was to be protected by a sheaf of regulations: "The same planning policies as would apply if that area were a national park," according to Mr Atkins.

Not being a national park, there is no single authority to run the Forest. The closest contender is the New Forest Committee, located in the High Street of Lyndhurst – the "capital" of the New Forest. But this name and address conceals a proliferation of authorities: eight on the committee itself, with a further three watching from the sidelines.



There is no single authority to run the Forest

National bodies are represented by the Forestry Commission, the Countryside Commission and English Nature (formerly the Nature Conservancy Council), which looks after Sites of Special Scientific Interest. A double layer of local government adds four councils to the tally. And the uniquely feudal tradition of the Forest means that Commissioners are represented by the Verderers, whose head is appointed directly by Her Majesty. The New Forest Committee has to make sense of a range of opinions, with more shades than the most colourful of maples.

In America, where they invented the national park, they do things rather differently. The National Parks Service, a federal agency, looks after everything from the French Quarter in New Orleans to the world's first national park, Yellowstone. Britain took up the idea of protecting open space during the Labour government's planning surge after World War II. The urban element of late 1940s town-and-country legislation created a ring of new towns around London, thus bestowing Basildon upon the post-war world. Perhaps by way of atonement, the government set out to

protect areas of wilderness where people from centres of population could enjoy the country. The UK's first national park, the Peak District, was neatly inserted between Sheffield and Manchester. Now there are ten parks in England and Wales, stretching from Dartmoor to Northumberland National Park. (Scotland asserts its independence in these matters, and has none.)

Except among those who want to build a factory or prospect for oil, the idea of protecting areas of countryside would seem to be naturally popular. Yet some environmentalists say national parks are inappropriate for an overcrowded nation such as Britain. Only in big countries like the US and Australia, where vast tracts of land can be protected, do they work. In the UK, the effect can be to create tourism "hotspots" but prevent a little old lady from putting up a garden shed or a farmer from making a decent living.

The buzzing of tourists around the honeyed sweetness of the New Forest is a phenomenon to test the patience of even the most tolerant resident. On a summer Sunday, the Lyndhurst one-way system is choked with traffic while its people choke on the fumes. Unlimited free access to the countryside comes at a price. In many towns, admission is charged at the park boundary. But unlike Yellowstone or Yulara, Britain's not-so-wide open spaces lack gushing geysers and massive monoliths. Would it be a £5 or £10 fee deter people from turning off the A31 to explore the New Forest? If they did, our countryside could be a greener and more pleasant land.



SIMON CALDER

To visit the New Forest last weekend, I caught a train from Waterloo and arrived at Brockenhurst 90 minutes later. In contrast to the calamitous post-privatisation rail trips that have dogged my progress in recent weeks, this was a refreshingly smooth journey. The screens that normally relate details of late or mislaid trains were deployed to give the latest soccer scores. Could it be that Britain's trains are settling in for a bout of reliability? Should my colleague Christian Wolmar ever run short of material for his Great Railway Disasters column in the *Independent on Sunday*, Richard Dean of Stockport has a suggestion.

"Perhaps it is time," he writes, "for your pages to relate occasions of airline absurdity". To kick off the series, Mr Dean supplies a splendidly awful story. He has just returned from a holiday in Texas with his wife Ruth, and seven-year-old daughter Abigail.

"Our return flight with American Airlines was booked Houston-Dallas-Chicago-Manchester. Because of the proximity of Hurricane Dolly, we abandoned the coast and drove to the Texas hill country around Austin. By then, Dallas was closer than Houston."

The Deans sensibly decided to drive straight to Dallas, and therefore miss out the first of the flights. They went to the American Airlines office in Austin to pass on the good news. On the outward journey, one of their flights had been heavily overbooked. So the Deans assumed the airline would be pleased at their decision to cancel a sector of the journey.

"No such luck! Instead, we were told we would each have to pay \$100 *not* to fly the Houston-Dallas leg. We were also informed that if we did not take the first flight, the following ones would automatically be cancelled. The reason given was that we were flying on discounted tickets, and nothing could be altered on them without financial penalty. We had in fact purchased them for £499 each at Trailfinders, hardly a bargain-basement price."

Disinclined to fork out another £65 for the right to forfeit a flight, Mr Dean and family duly trudged over to storm-tossed Houston. "Arriving in good time for check-in, we were requested by the airline to take an earlier flight." Generously, the Deans agreed. They were given the boarding passes for the whole homeward trip.

"When we got to Chicago – yes, you've guessed – our seats on the flight to Manchester had been cancelled as we had not been on the 'right' flight earlier that day." The family was initially told there were no seats for them, but after a difficult hour space was finally found. No compensation was offered by the airline for the ordeal, but this weekend BBC Radio 4's *Breakaway* programme (9.30am today, 10.45pm on Sunday) promises to put American Airlines on the spot.

Next summer, the Deans may prefer to take one of the fast and frequent Stockport to Brockenhurst expresses. Overbooking is rarely a problem. And on the £50-40 supersaver fare, there is no penalty to be paid if you decide to abandon your journey at Basingstoke.

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The wise woman's guide to going solo

By Abigail Raynor and Omega Douglas

"My main fear is the loneliness, missing being on a plane and not knowing what to expect - and not having anyone to run to should things go wrong." Like thousands of other recent graduates, Alicia Saunders is planning a solo round-the-world trip.

To many parents, the idea of their daughter setting off alone to far-flung places is terrifying. Past tragedies quickly come to mind, such as the fate of Johanne Mashender and Linda Vockins: British women who set off independently through South East Asia, but were raped and murdered when travelling in Thailand and the Philippines respectively.

Yet women have been going it alone for decades, bringing home tales of adventure - from the stories of 19th-century heroines such as Isabella Bird, to contemporary travellers like Sara Wheeler, whose account of her expedition to Antarctica, *Terra Incognita*, has just been published by Cape.

Many women would agree that the best way to have an adventure is by themselves. But what advice would they give to Alicia and others? We talked to four women who have travelled alone over the past four decades.



Ella Barker travelled round Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia in 1991.

"I'd just broken up with my boyfriend and I woke up one morning and thought, 'Right, I'm going to get a ticket, buy a book and I'm off.' It was a personal challenge and I had some great experiences. On one occasion I spent the whole day snorkeelling in solitude and it was amazing. Ironically, that was also one of my worst days. This guy invited me back to his place and ended up trying to grope me. That's definitely one of the disadvantages of being a woman on your own; men see you as an easy lay."

"I never felt threatened in Thailand. Malaysia was more of a problem because they're strict about women showing their bodies. The women who did have trouble were those who didn't respect the laws.

"I'd advise women on their own to consider the climates of their destinations: the weather dominates your experience. Go easy on drugs and alcohol because in other climates things affect you differently. You'll be around strangers and you want to stay in control."



Kate Roberts was 19 when she went Inter-railing across Europe in the late Eighties. She is now a graduate trainee at Ford in Glasgow.

"It was purely circumstantial that I went travelling alone. That summer, no one else was in a position to go away. I didn't have any fears about travelling by myself; in fact, I got quite a buzz from it. I felt so ridiculous free."

"My worst experience was when I travelled on an overnight train to Florence. I locked myself in the compartment, put my money in a bum bag and hid it under my pillow.

"I woke up to find that the door had been forced open and that my money had been stolen. Apparently a gang of thieves, who used

"narco" gas to knock out their victims, were operating on the trains. Anything could have happened, I was so vulnerable.

"I'd advise women on their own not to travel on public transport overnight but pay extra, stay in a youth hostel and wait till the morning to move on."

Mabel Perez left Paraguay, her native country, in 1975 at the age of 19. She travelled alone for 10 years in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. She now lives in Bristol.

"When I left Paraguay, my family and friends thought I was crazy. It was unthinkable for a woman to travel on her own. But it was my call in life, and I didn't want anyone to go with me."

"During my travels I felt surrounded by danger. I was afraid of the cold, of rape and of being homeless, but the more you travel, the more you realise that dangers exist everywhere."

"The only time I had real problems was in the Middle East. The constant harassment got very upsetting. Another of my worst experiences was getting ill and being alone. I came close to death with cholera in India and with malaria in Africa. I felt like an abandoned child."

"I wouldn't travel on my own again because I've fulfilled that need. But I'd like to go back to all the places I've visited and make a film for young girls in Paraguay to show them there are so many different ways of living."

Louise Paterson travelled to Belize and Guatemala in the mid-1980s when she was 22.

"I chose to go alone because I wanted to do something different. I didn't know much about Belize and I went in a fairly unthinking way. At that time, going to Central America was unusual, places were less accessible and there weren't guidebooks like the *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide*.

"Going to places that were so unlike anything I knew and glimpsing at how other people lived was probably one of the most positive things I've ever done.

"I did occasionally feel vulnerable but never in any real danger. As a European woman, riding on a bus alone you were stared at. But you're never completely on your own as you always meet people. Should women be aware of their limitations so that they don't get themselves into unpleasant situations. Knowing that you can live with yourself and that you're not going to crack up if you haven't got your friends around you is important. A lot of people travel to find themselves, but you need to know yourself well before you set out."

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Legends of the fall: beautiful and true

New England: a riot of gentleness and colour. By Cathy Packer

This is the time of a year for a walk through the woods, with the leaves crackling underfoot, with pine cones, conkers, and the smell of a distant bonfire. Green turns to brown and the brilliance of the countryside in summer becomes subdued.

But in New England in the fall, it is as if someone has taken a match to the drying leaves and the whole countryside has burst into flame. The trees don't shed their leaves here until they have put on a display so dazzling that it would make a coat of many colours look like a camouflage jacket.

New England is a region of mountains and farmland, gentle hills and streams. Everywhere, there are trees: birches, mountain ash, sumach, oak; but it is the maples that make the greatest contribution to the canvas. The intense colour for a brief period in autumn is the result of chemical reactions in the trees brought on by changes in the climate. As the summer days remain warm but become shorter, and the nights become longer and colder, the leaves stop producing chlorophyll. Greenness is replaced by pigments which are not otherwise seen. The result - heightened by the first frosts - is an unreal canvas of fiery oranges and reds displayed against a backdrop of evergreen firs. Towards the end of the season, when the first flakes of snow begin to fall and settle on the green needles like cotton-

wool on a Christmas tree, there are few more magical sights.

Coloured accents, if any were needed, are provided by the fruit bushes. The cranberry bogs turn ruby red and the blueberries and blackberries along the coast are crimson, against the autumn ocean. On doorsteps in farmyards and piled up on roadside stalls are gourds, Indian corn and big orange pumpkins, ready for Halloween and Thanksgiving.

As with anywhere in America, sightseeing tends to be done by car. In every state, there is an official trail, often taking in many of the

most beautiful and historic villages. In Connecticut there is a loop about 100 miles long which meanders through the valley of the Housatonic River and the spectacular farmland around West Cornwall. In Massachusetts, the Mohawk Trail follows an old Indian route past Mount Greylock and through the state forest between the Taconics and the Green Mountains which stretch up into Vermont. The advantage of following an official trail is that it will be well signposted and thoughtfully provided with parking places overlooking the most spectacular scenery.

Leaves on the line: New England in the Fall

The best airport for the whole of New England is Boston, served daily from Gatwick, Heathrow and Glasgow. For travel at the end of September, availability is patchy, but discount agents are selling such seats as there are for £340-£360 return, including tax.

The season for leaf-watching is broadly mid-September to mid-October, although it is expected to be a little late this year. The leaves tend to change colour first in the mountains and in the more northerly parts of the region.

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Massachusetts: 617 727 3201 or 800 632 8038; New Hampshire: 603 271 2343 or 800 258 3608; Rhode Island: 401 277 2603 or 800 556 2484; Vermont: 802 282 3239 or 800 837 6668.

General information about New England is available on 01732 742777, and can also be found on the Internet at <http://www.discovernewengland.com>. Information about local events can be found in local newspapers and on notice boards in village stores.

But the foliage does not have to be seen through a car windscreen. A more imaginative way to look at the leaves is to view them from above and below.

Ski lifts in the resorts of Vermont and New Hampshire are not used for their intended purpose until late November; but they still operate, floating quietly above a patchwork carpet of leaves which spreads out below them.

Lake Winnipesaukee in New Hampshire nestles under Mount Washington, the highest peak in New England and densely covered with trees on its lower slopes. A three-hour cruise on the lake on the MS *Mount Washington* can be a stunning prelude to a trip up to the mountain top on the hundred-year-old cog railway.

New England is nothing if not folksy. The urban sprawl and the freeways are for a different America. This is village territory. Here, white clapboard churches stand on village greens, detached houses with rocking chairs on the veranda stand in their own lawns; village stores with their dark corners and homely smells are stuffed with local cheeses and maple syrup; farmers set up shop along the country roads selling apple cider.

In New England, the pace of life is slow and people have time for each other. As village communities gather for harvest festivals and chicken pie suppers, this is a place to feel at home.

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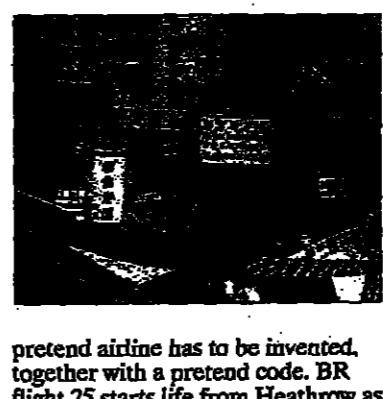
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Photos and letters give a nice personal touch - Julie Simons, Northants

Not excellent value at £8 each. And why leave cars open in the areas if you don't want people in them? Disappointed overall - Andrew and Sharon Burney, Stowmarket.

BA 25, but once in Hong Kong it becomes BR 25 for the onward hop to Taipei. (Conveniently, this is an old code left in BA's possession after it took over British Caledonian.)

Other airlines are equally circumspect about their operations to Taiwan. Qantas, for example, calls itself Australia Asia Airways on Taipei flights. But BA's global network means it is often necessary to use a British Asia Airways plane in odd corners of the world, like the Lusaka to Lilongwe route in southern Africa. The tangle of politics and travel can be baffling.

Trouble spots

The new edition of Traveller magazine (available only to members of Wexas, 0171-589 0500) includes the following nuggets from correspondents.

"The so-called relaxation of border controls within the EU seems to be entirely at the whim of the countries concerned, or at least that of the border guards. I have been ordered in the past to report to the local police station in Italy for not carrying my 'papers'. When I duly arrived with my passport in hand, I found a gauntlet of equally bemused British citizens." - William Bathgate, Barnes.

"Airport taxes here in Asia are increasing rapidly... 25 per cent in Thailand to 250 baht (£7), a massive 100 per cent in Malaysia to RM40 (£10.30)." - Alan E Smith, Thailand.

"Gaza is still the gem it always was, although how long this will last is debatable; I would urge your readers to check that the hotel where they are staying is 'eco-friendly'." - Alexandra Reece, Shropshire.

"Sub-Saharan Africa: there is an outbreak of meningitis in this area, and northern Nigeria is particularly bad hit." - B Cain, Middlesex.

"Almost every body of fresh water in the African continent poses a serious health hazard (through bilharzia) to anyone who bathes, swims, works or plays in it." - Dr Richard Dawood, Fleet Street Travel Clinic.

"Don't miss the Old Turkish Town, still superb despite a lot of destruction. One word of warning: the camel ride on the Gugus beach is a two-minute flat scam." - Michel L Roger, Massawa, Eritrea.

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HOVER SPEED

FAST FREIGHT

Houses you can put your trust in

By Penny Jackson

It would be a rare visitor to a National Trust property who did not at some point imagine themselves living there. A moment's idle daydream for most, but for others the prospect of living in an historic house is tempting enough for them to change their lives within a matter of weeks. The Trust has no shortage of people who want to take on a tenancy. Since last week, when the search began for new tenants of Lamb House in Rye, East Sussex, the Trust has received well over a hundred applicants, with more arriving each day.

The previous tenants of the former home of the novelist Henry James, and later E F Benson, gave up after a few months. The work involved in running the house and dealing with the public proved too much. James Cooper, the National Trust land agent for Kent and East Sussex, has the task of weeding out the applications. "A lot of those people will be romantics who imagine that it is an easy job. But the kind of person we want has to be practical, hard-working and full of enthusiasm." After a rigorous selection procedure he hopes to have new tenants in the house by the New Year.

It was just such an advertisement a year ago that stopped Catharine and David Boston in their tracks. Out of the blue they read that tenants were wanted for Quebec House, the childhood home of General Wolfe in Westerham, Kent. A few months later they were ensconced in a house they knew well and had always loved, their home in Blackheath, London, in turn rented out. "The house has the most wonderful atmosphere. Even though there are pictures of Wolfe everywhere it still feels like a family home," says Mrs Boston. Quebec House is open to the public and the National Trust regards them as their representatives - the welcoming face of the Trust.

The Bostons, on a 10 year lease, have strong connections with Canada and are well versed in its history. David Boston is himself a retired museum director and they have more than embraced the spirit of the enterprise by opening



the house an extra half day, organising chamber concerts and making it more accessible to local people. What about the public, though? Mrs Boston is diplomatic: "There are those who come because it is included in their itinerary, but the enthusiasts more than make up for them. One of our regular visitors is a 12-year-old boy who is fascinated by Wolfe and his campaign."

In the past year, the trust has introduced a new agreement which entitles tenants to a rebate on the past year's rent if they are doing all that is required of them. In the case of Quebec House it is 30 per cent and for Lamb House half of the £10,000 rent. James Cooper described it as a reward for a good "end of school report". Certainly, anyone aspiring to rent off the trust should have plenty of initia-

The National Trust has no shortage of people willing to take on a tenancy

tive and enthusiasm. Although a lease is drawn up for each property, generally the trust will be responsible for the structure of the house and the tenant for its day to day running costs and decoration. The level of rent will reflect the state of the house and the obligations of the tenant.

When Carrie and Anthony Weston and their baby Jack moved into Tudor Yeoman's House, Cobham in Kent, it had been empty for a couple of years. The 15th century timber-framed house was, in Carrie Weston's words, a bit of a mess. "We both had jobs but would work on the house at every opportunity. We put in a bathroom (the trust paid for the plumbing), did the decorating and took on the massively overgrown garden. We also opened it to the public for the first time."

Now, two years on they have moved out. "It was a lot of hard work - but wonderful. At Christmas we would have a huge roaring fire in the banqueting hall which went up to the rafters. We decided to move out when our daughter was born. The children slept the other side of the hall and during the night I would have to cross this vast freezing space to see her. Heating the place was horrendous."

The Westons were also conscious of their costs and the fact that at some time they would want a house of their own. "We were paying £550 a month rent and on top of that £50 a month in insurance and £800 a year to maintain the fire alarm. In winter it cost an extra £200 per month to keep the storage heaters going." Now that they have moved into their own - old but not ancient - house is there anything Carrie Weston misses? The atmosphere, certainly, but not the cold. "The first thing we did was put on all the radiators, just for the hell of it."

National Trust rental enquiries: 0171-222 9251

Househunter
Slynes Oak, Surrey



A Grade II listed Georgian country house near the village of Woldingham in Surrey has just come on to the market. Slynes Oak, with its 22 acres, is described as a small country estate. The spacious house is surrounded by gardens of sweeping lawns and banks of rhododendrons, and has views over the Halliford Valley. The driveway, which splits in front of the house, leads to a Victorian two-bedroom cottage, stable courtyard with five loose boxes, and other outbuildings. The house has three reception rooms, a kitchen/breakfast room, eight bedrooms and three bathrooms. The guide price for the whole estate is £775,000. If sold separately, Slynes Oak plus five acres is £200,000; the cottage and a further five acres is £175,000; the stableyard, £50,000 and the remaining 12 or so acres of land is offered at a guide of £50,000. The agent is Savills (0171 499 8644).

For what its worth

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One of the great redeeming merits of the investment trust sector is that they are quoted companies – and trusts which perform badly are vulnerable to predatory action by more successful rivals

Europe is proving a dangerous place in which to try to invest. Hard on the heels of the Morgan Grenfell Scandal comes the final demise of Kleinwort Benson's European Privatisation Investment Trust, known as Kepit. The trust is going to be wound up, with – on the board's favoured proposal – shareholders having the chance to take either cash or units in either an M&G or a new European privatisation fund.

The Kepit saga is another cautionary tale for the times. As more details of the Morgan Grenfell disaster come out, it is clear that it is going to prove another example of one of the investment world's oldest truths – its performance was simply too good to be true. Investors could suspend disbelief as long as the exceptional performance persisted, but a reckoning with reality could not be deferred forever.

Kepit is a rather different – and perhaps more unusual – story. Far from being too good to be true, the trust has been too true to be any good. It will go down in history as the investment trust that proved too popular to do its job properly.

When it was launched just over two years ago, Kepit was one of the

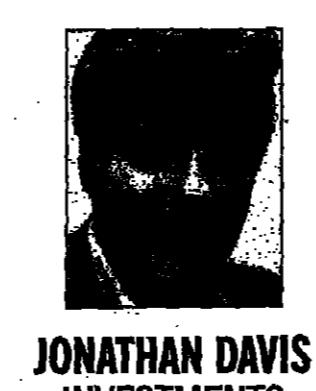
most successful launches ever seen in this country, raising £500m. At the time, it seemed a terrific idea. With privatisation sweeping across every country in Europe, it was obvious that there were going to be a large number of new issues on offer.

As UK privatisation stocks have mostly been a great idea for investors so, the bright sparks at Kleinwort Benson reckoned, why not start a fund that invested solely in this kind of issue? As a marketing concept, it was brilliant. The punters certainly seemed to love it.

The £500m raised was matched the next month by an almost identical offering from Mercury Asset Management. Its European Privatisation Investment Trust raised £575m. Ten years earlier, any investment trust which raised £25m would have been doing exceptionally well.

Alas, events were not as kind to Kepit as the concept seemed to merit. It didn't help that the launch coincided with the great bond market crash of February 1994, when it seemed as if interest rates were going to start rising sharply. Bond markets around the world took flight and stock markets shivered in sympathy.

But worse was to follow. Despite



JONATHAN DAVIS
INVESTMENTS

all the hoopla, Kepit simply refused to fly. Before too long the shares were trading at a substantial discount to the fund's net asset value, which itself was far from sparkling. The fund managers began to realise there were simply not enough good privatisation issues around to absorb the huge amounts of cash which they and Mercury had raised.

At one point the discount on Kepit's shares reached 20 per cent, when most other investment trusts were still trading at discounts below 10 per cent. The Mercury investment trust suffered a similar fate. Both trusts are still worth less today

than the amount of money which the investors subscribed at the outset.

The poor performance of Kepit has become a major embarrassment for Kleinwort, which resorted to increasingly desperate attempts to breathe new life into it. To no avail. It didn't take a genius to work out that something would have to give. One of the great redeeming merits of the investment trust sector is that, unlike unit trusts, they are quoted companies – and trusts which perform badly are vulnerable to predatory action by more successful rivals.

As Kepit floundered, other fund managers stepped in with an expertise in European markets naturally started casting their eye over it.

Colin MacLean, whose Scottish Value Trust makes its living by investing in poorly performing investment trusts in order to put pressure on the managers to take a stake and start pressing for changes.

Then, this summer, the dam burst. Henderson's Touché Remnant launched a bid which offered shareholders the chance to swap their shares for a holding in TR European Growth, one of the most successful investment trusts this field. Once their bid was on the table, the game

was effectively up for Kepit. When the board met to decide its fate this month, it had nearly a dozen different options to consider.

This week it unveiled its advice to shareholders. It conceded that Kepit had no independent future, but rejected the TR bid. Instead, it is recommending a solution which will effectively give shareholders the chance to choose between taking cash for the value of the assets or switching their money into either a European unit trust run by M&G or a European privatisation unit trust run by – guess who? – Kleinwort Benson Investment Management.

The concept, says the chairman of Kepit, is still a valid one. European privatisations are here to stay, and there will be good profits to be made from them – one day. That may well be true. But it should not stop one drawing a few morals from the saga.

One is that fashionable concepts are never a substitute for careful investment. The concept itself overlooked several things, not least the fact that many of the privatisations in Europe have learnt lessons from the early UK experience and are rarely as generously priced as their UK counterparts. As the investment

trust watchers at Crédit Lyonnais Laing sage pointed out two years ago "too many investment trust launches are led by marketing opportunities rather than on fundamental investment criteria".

Secondly, the Kepit saga rather gives the lie to the old notion that investment trusts are bought, while unit trusts are sold. Most people know that unit trusts are heavily influenced by commissions paid to intermediaries. It is no coincidence that the biggest selling unit trusts are usually the ones that have been most heavily promoted and pay the best commission rates.

It is probably no coincidence that Kepit was also the most heavily incentivised investment trust launch of all time. Kleinwort Benson paid a commission of 6 per cent to all those who submitted applications for shares – double the normal rate.

Now it says it rather wishes it hadn't – for the incentives, coupled with the way the concept caught fire, produced far more money than the fund could profitably invest. In economics, too much money chasing too few goods produces inflation: in investment trusts it just produces deflation and disappointment.



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Firms that opt-out of pension contributions

A rule change in April could catch out employers. By Isabel Berwick



Retirement plans: Employees often think they're getting a good, cheap deal. Many are not

Photograph: Edward Sykes

Because many of us don't make a point of reading the small print on our company pensions, some employers have been running schemes that seem to offer a good deal to their employees without paying a penny in voluntary contributions to the fund. Now hundreds of these tight-fisted employers look set to be caught out by a change to company pension schemes.

The problem affects a type of money-purchase company scheme set up to build up an alternative pension to the state earnings-related pension scheme (Serps).

The attraction of these contracted-out money purchase schemes (Comps) is that staff and employers pay reduced National Insurance contributions. The Department of Social Security then allows employers to pay an annual rebate of National Insurance contributions into each employee's Comp fund. The rebate is currently fixed at 4.8 per cent a year, made up of 3 per cent from the employer and 1.8 per cent from the employee. The employee's contribution is boosted by basic rate tax relief and many employees have been convinced they are getting a good cheap deal. They are not.

Allied Dunbar's pensions development director Tony Reardon isn't impressed by firms which operate these so-called "bare" schemes, which just collect NI rebates without adding any extra contributions to boost the fund. He says: "This is just redirected National Insurance money that would have been paid anyway. Employers can pass this off as a genuine pension contribution but the staff member could have put the 4.8 per cent into a portable personal pension."

Firms who offer this poor-value deal to staff are, however, likely to be caught out, as changes to the pension regulations next April will mean that it is more efficient to transform these company schemes

into group personal pension plans. From next April, the annual rebate paid into Comp schemes will be lower than the rebate paid to people who have opted out of Serps through a personal pension plan. Employers will pay a basic rebate of 3.1 per cent into staff Comp schemes. The DSS will top this up with age-related payments at the end of the year. For a worker aged 45 the total rebate is 8 per cent, with the balance of 4.9 per cent paid by the DSS.

Tony Reardon says: "If the employer has only been paying 4.8 per cent into the Comp scheme then if they replace it with a personal pension it will be clear that they don't pay any of their own funds. Even if they are putting in 8 per cent a year, then that's only 3.2 per cent in real contributions. It will look bad even if they spend the same."

The move is intended to help older people who have contracted out of Serps. Until now, many older people working part-time or on lower incomes have found themselves in a position where they would be better off re-joining the state scheme - which will be expensive for the DSS.

The changes may well spell the end of the road for Comps. Earlier this month Scottish Amicable announced that they intend to withdraw from the market. The firm is a market-leader and manages about 2,000 schemes. Its pensions marketing manager, John Glendinning, says the schemes are quite complicated to run and other options now provide better value for money.

Sun Life is also pulling out of Comps and encouraging firms to transfer their business to group personal pension plans. Several other pensions firms are rumoured to be unhappy.

Some pensions managers say they realised back in 1988 that personal pensions would be the Government's favoured vehicle for our working life.

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The National Savings movement has added a new product, the Treasurer's Account to its range, aimed at thousands of charities, trusts, friendly societies, trade unions, and clubs and societies of all kinds who have £10,000 in cash on which 5 per cent gross interest currently looks attractive. The rate rises to 5.25 per cent on £25,000 and 5.5 per cent on £100,000, with a maximum deposit of £2m.

Interest accumulates daily from the date of deposit, and is paid gross on 31 December. Funds can be withdrawn at 30 days notice or loss of interest. An estimated 50,000 non-profit-making bodies are eligible, with funds of £250m on deposit with banks and building societies, but the chief executive of National Savings, Peter Barreau, expects "thousands rather than tens of thousands of customers".

Fidelity is relaunching its top-performing UK Dividend Growth Fund as MoneyBuilder Growth, and adding it to its range of MoneyBuilder unit trusts, which feature no entry or exit charges. The fund is aimed at younger, first-time unit trust investors and those wanting a core of units generating income and growth rather than a specialised higher-risk fund.

The fund invests at least half its assets in FT-SE 100 companies with emphasis on the 40 or so which have increased dividends every year in the last five. The existing fund currently yields 2.24 per cent, after the annual management fee of 1 per cent, and the minimum investment is £3,000 or £50 a month.

Scottish Amicable is launching two new pension funds offering personal pension purchasers full or partial capital protection for their funds.

The 100 per cent Safeguard and 95 per cent Safeguard offer that much protection by investing sufficient in cash deposits to compensate against falls in the FT-SE 100 index, where the remaining funds are deployed. Gains can be locked in every three months. An annual management fee of 0.875 per cent is charged.

ShareLink, the telephone share-dealing service which merged last year with Charles Schwab of the US, is starting a Frequent Traders Club, with a membership fee of £60 and an administration charge of £6 a quarter, which offers customers a telephone dealing system seven days a week up to 12 hours a day and charges a flat £16.50 per deal regardless of size.

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ast week's news that a Morgan Grenfell fund manager broke City rules by pumping millions into risky hi-tech companies will make many small savers still more wary of the stock market.

They know that their bank and building society savings are earning only a derisory rate of interest, and realise that equities are where the greater rewards lie. And yet many still hold back from buying shares, fearing that they will see their savings disappear in a repeat of the 1987 crash.

Now banks and other fund managers are trying to woo these savers with PEPs which, they say, can offer the best of both worlds – all the potential growth of a rising stock market, but no risk of your capital falling if the market drops. The latest such guaranteed products come from Barclays Unicorn and Marks & Spencer.

Barclays Unicorn's Grant Phillips says: "The man on the street recognises the stock market is where the money is, but he's just not prepared to take that extra step. The problem that has come to light at Morgan Grenfell just goes to show that it's time for the unit trust industry to look at how it can protect savers."

An earlier generation of safety-first products, such as NatWest's Safeguard unit trust, work not by guaranteeing your capital will stay at or above its original level, but by setting an annual benchmark and aiming to ensure that your capital does not fall more than 5 per cent below that level.

However, the new products are much more straightforward, saying simply that, if your investment is worth less in five years than it is now, they will make up the difference.

Barclays Guaranteed PEP puts savers' money into the company's FTSE 100 tracker trust, which shadows the performance of Britain's 100 biggest companies. Money goes into the fund on 8 November this year for a five-year term.

If the market rises during that period, investors will get the full growth of the FTSE 100. If the market should fall, then Barclays will give savers a cheque to make up their capital to its original level.

Mr Phillips says: "We see this as the next step for 'Tess' people. We're talking about people who want to benefit from all the gains there are to be had on the stock market, but are nervous about getting their feet wet."

The guarantee does not apply to any sums withdrawn from the plan before 8 November 2001. An exit charge of up to 4.25 per cent also applies on early withdrawals.

Minimum investment is £1,000.

There is an initial charge of 5 per cent,

plus an annual fee of 1 per cent on the unit trust element and a fixed charge of 1.2 per cent to cover the guarantee.

Unlike most providers, Barclays Unicorn levies the guarantee charge only on your original investment, as opposed to its growing value.

This can make quite a difference. Assuming growth of 9 per cent a year, paying an annual charge of 1.2 per cent on an investment of £6,000 as it grew year by year would mean total charges of £462.

Pegging that charge to the original £6,000 for the full five years – as Barclays Unicorn does – means total charges of just £360.

The plan is available from Barclays branches or through independent financial advisers. "Even though this product is easy to understand, we think these types of customers still need advice," says Mr Phillips.

Marks & Spencer's Guaranteed Capital Investment Plan, like the Barclays PEP, will make up any shortfall in investors' capital if the FTSE 100 should fall over the five years to 8 November 2001. In this case, the guarantee is underwritten by M&S Financial Services.

An earlier version of the same plan pulled in £25m in just four weeks in March this year.

Minimum investment in the M&S PEP is £3,000. There is no initial charge, but there is an annual unit trust charge of 1 per cent and a guarantee charge of 1.75 per cent – this time levied on the growing value of the fund. There is no exit charge on early withdrawals from the M&S plan, and the guarantee also applies if the planholder dies during the five-year term.

It is unlikely that either Barclays Unicorn or M&S will ever have to make good on their guarantees, as the chances are the stock market will rise over any five-year period. But some investors will find the guarantees worthwhile just for peace of mind. Della Morgan of M&S says: "Obviously, the chances are the guarantee won't be necessary. We hope the stock market won't go down, but it's anybody's guess what could happen over the next five years."

A third new PEP, this one from HSBC Asset Management, offers not a straightforward money-back guarantee, but a combination of deposit-based investment, interest rate swaps and share options which should ensure that, even in a falling market, savers get their original investment back after five years. The company does not describe the fund as guaranteed, but as being "capital secure".

If the FTSE 100 grows over the plan's five-year term, investors will get all of that growth, plus a bonus of about 25 per cent. The bonus applies only if the plan is kept running for the full five years. There is an initial charge of 5.25 per cent and an annual charge of 0.5 per cent. The price of HSBC's "guarantee" is that investors get no income in the form of dividends from the shares they own. The plan is available through IFAs.

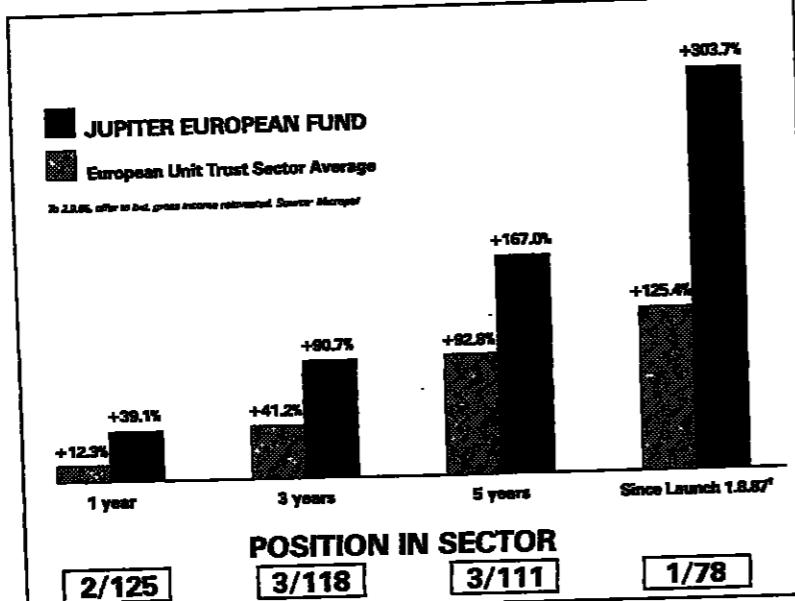
HSBC's Adam Noon says that, while the company hopes to attract the same first-time equity investors Barclays Unicorn and M&S are pitching for, it also hopes to pull in more experienced investors. "One of the major markets will be people who have had PEPs for a number of years and are now looking to lock in some of those gains because they're a bit more nervous with the effects of a new government on the equity market."



Loosing investors' trust: Morgan Grenfell fund manager Peter Young has reinforced many savers' prejudices about stock markets. Photograph: Reuters

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Jupiter Unit Trust Managers became Manager of the fund on 13th November 1990. *Source: Micropal

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Source survey by
Tempest Consultants

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	Telephone	% Rate and period	Max. adv %	Fee	Incentive	Redemption penalty
Fixed rates						
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	0.20 for 1 year	85	0.75%	—	1st 5 yrs: 7.04% of sum repaid
Norwich & Norfolk 01733 391497	6.45 for 3 years	85	£295	—	—	1st 5 yrs: 6 mths interest
Britannia BS	0800 526350	7.74 for 5 years	95	£295	Unemployment inc.	1st 5 yrs: 180 days interest
Variable rates						
Northern Rock BS	0800 581500	0.99 to 1/10/97	90	—	Refund valn fee	1st 6 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Principality BS	01222 344188	3.60% to 1/10/98	90	—	—	To 30/9/97: discount reclaimed
Abbey National	0800 555100	5.74 to 31/8/01	95	—	Refund valn fee	To 31/8/02: 1st determined
First time buyers fixed rates						
Alliance & Leic BS	0800 via local branch	2.10 to 1/10/97	95	0.5%	—	To 1/10/01: 6 mths interest
Market Harborough BS	01858 463244	4.49 to 1/7/98	90	£250	Unemployment inc.	To 1/7/00: 3 mths interest
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	7.49 to 1/8/01	95	£295	—	1st 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
First time buyers variable rates						
Principality BS	01222 344188	1.00 to 1/10/97	90	—	—	To 30/9/01: discount reclaimed
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	4.24% to 1/10/99	95	£295	Refund valn fee	1st 7 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Halifax BS	0800 101110	5.43 to 30/9/01	90	—	£300 & free valn	To 30/9/03: 1-4% of advance

	Telephone	APR	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 years)		
			With insurance	Without insurance	
Unsecured			£121.86	£101.33	
Direct Line	0141 248 9966	13.90%	£114.93	£102.36	
Alliance & Leicester	0116 262 5262	14.80	£115.22	£102.49	
Midland Bank	0800 180180	14.90	—	—	Max LTV Advance
Cybercard Bank	0800 240224	7.50	Neg	£28K-£15K	6 mths to 25 years
Royal B of Scotland	0131 523 7023	8.70	70%	£2.5K-£10K	3 years to retirement
Barclays Bank	0800 000529	9.3-9.6	80%	£10K-75K	5 to 25 years

	Telephone	Account	Authorised % pm	Unauthorised % pm	APR
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.76	9.5	2.18
Alliance & Leicester 0500 555555	Alliance	0.76	9.5	2.20	29.8
Abbey National	0500 200500	Current	0.94	11.9	2.18

	Telephone	Card type	Min. Income	Rate % pm	APR	Annual Fee	Int. free period
Standard							
Co-operative Bank	0800 109000	Advantage Visa	—	0.64%	7.90%	nil	0 days
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.895%	11.20	nil	0 days
Midland Bank	01702 353344	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.945%	11.90%	nil	56 days
Gold cards							
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.4792	10.32	£120	46 days
Royal B of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05%	14.50%	£35	46 days
People's Bank Conn	0500 551055	MasterCard/Visa	£20,000	1.13	14.40	nil	56 days

	Telephone	Card type	Min. Income	Rate % pm	APR	Annual Fee	Int. free period
STORE CARDS							
John Lewis	in store	1.39	18.0	1.39	18.00	—	
Marks & Spencer	01244 681681	1.87	24.80	1.97	26.30	—	
Sears	in store	1.94	25.90	2.20	29.80	—	

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All rates subject to change without notice.

Source: MONEYFACTS 01692 500677

12 September 1996

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Portman BS	01202 292444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.50	Year
Co-Operative Bank	0345 252000	Pathfinder	Instant	£5,000	4.75	Month
Direct Line	0181 657 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£50,000	5.50	Year
Direct Line	0181 657 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£50,000	5.75	Year

	Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Teachers' BS	0800 378869	Bullion	Postal	£500	4.80	Year
Alliance & Leic BS	0645 845660	Instant Direct	Postal	£5,000	5.40	Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 901109	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£10,000	5.85	Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 901109	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£25,000	6.05	Year

	Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Chelsea BS	0800 132351	Post-1st 20 Day	20 day P	£5,000	6.05	Year
Cheltenham & Gloucester	0800 717505	Direct 30	30 day P	£100	5.50	Year
First National BS	0800 558844	90 Day Notice	90 day P	£10,000	6.20	Year
Yorkshire BS	0800 378836	Notice Interest	1 Yr Bond	£1,000	6.25	Year

	Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Kleinwort Benson	01202 502404	HICA	Instant	£2,500	5.00	Month
Halifax BS	01422 353333	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	4.00	Quarterly
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	4.35	Year
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£25,000	4.65	Year

	Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Bristol & West BS	0800 202121	Year Plus Bond	1/2/97	£5,000	6.25	Month
Norwich & Peterborough	0173					

Funds with a near eastern flavour

Alison Eadie looks at investments in southern Europe and the Middle East

Southern Europe and the Middle East are often neglected in global emerging markets portfolios. Sometimes lumped in with Eastern Europe and Africa, they are rarely a fund manager's first priority. Their performance in recent years suggests such neglect may be justified. Turkey, in the five years to the end of 1995, made a small overall loss and Greece a total return of barely 20 per cent, according to Morgan Stanley indices. These compare with more than doubled total returns from the UK stock market.

The markets do not lend themselves to easy analysis. They tend to move independently of each other, often influenced by domestic rather than external events, and brokers' research is thin in the ground. However, fund managers are increasingly making an effort to cover the region. Abtrust's recently launched Frontier Markets unit trust targets emerging Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Foreign & Colonial manages the Emerging Middle East Fund out of London, although it is listed in New York. Abtrust's Turkey Trust and BZW's Israel Fund, both investment trusts, concentrate on single countries.

Stockpicking funds like Templeton Emerging Markets Investment Trust, which ignores index weightings, has also found value in the region. At its financial year end at 30 April, its top 20 holdings included Banco Comercial Portugues, Alpha Credit Bank in Greece and Eregi Demir ve Celik Fabrikalari, a Turkish manufacturer of flat steel products. Investments in Turkey, Greece and Portugal represented nearly 20 per cent of the trust.

The Portuguese market, up around 20 per cent this year in dollar terms, has been one of the better performers. Templeton's Mark Mobius acknowledges Portugal may not show the explosive economic growth of some Asian economies, but with further privatisation, corporate restructuring and economic reform it will catch up with its more developed neighbours. Growth has exceeded that of many developed countries in the past 10 years, he points out, and the number of listed companies has increased from 24 in 1985 to 169 by 1995.

Whereas Portugal is affected by developments in Europe, Turkey marches to its own, very volatile, tune. Having been a hot favourite with some fund managers earlier this year, it has fallen out of favour. The stock market, up 44 per cent in mid-April, is now showing gains of only 11 per cent. Arun Banerji, chief investment officer at F&C Emerging Markets, says Turkey has some world class companies, but is a macroeconomic mess characterised by high inflation and government overspending.

Worries are mounting about the ballooning trade deficit and stability of the currency, says Andrew Elder of Abtrust. The US confrontation with Iraq has also put the oil for food deal into jeopardy. The Turkey Trust has nearly 10 per cent of its assets in cash now against a 3 per cent norm and favours companies with a strong export bias.

Israel is the largest market in the region, capitalised at \$35bn (£22bn) or closer to \$30bn after including Israeli companies listed solely in New York. In terms of wealth and education it is not a true emerging market. It boasts the highest number of PhDs per head in the world and has GDP per capita approaching \$20,000. However, emerging markets specialists consider the stock market underdeveloped and thus within their ambit.



Growing faster than most of its neighbours: The Portuguese market is up about 20 per cent in dollar terms this year

Its performance this year has been poor, with the Tel Aviv index of 100 leading stocks down 16 per cent. Government inability to tackle overspending and continuing worries on inflation have caused weakness. The shekel is also at the bottom of its trading range against a basket of currencies, forcing Bank of Israel intervention.

Lyndsey Tennant, who manages BZW's Israel Fund, admits: "There are leaky points on the macro side, but on the micro side there are some very good, well-managed companies."

He believes the Israeli market is cheap with prices at 10.5 times this year's earnings against a more normal multiple of 14 to 18 times. "With earnings growth of 10 to 15 per cent in real terms, shares are pretty good value and at a discount to many emerging markets," he says.

Israel's high technology sector is a big attraction. Cost effective solutions in telecoms and computers, often developed

from military to civilian use, are being exported to developing countries. Mr Tennant points out that the peace process means Israel is now selling to South-east Asia and other markets previously closed to it because of the Arab boycott.

Foreign investor interest in Israel is still muted in some quarters. The IMF has just told the government to speed up privatisations to bring down the budget deficit, but applying for such issues can be a frustrating experience, according to Irfan Jammoahed of Mercury Privatisations, and some initial public offerings in the past have suffered from high pricing and an unpredictable auction system or have been pulled at the last moment, he says.

The smaller markets of the region do not seem to have much going for them at the moment. Greece is off the buy list of Abtrust's Frontier Markets trust for being too boring. Mr Elder says: "Nothing is happening and companies are not cheap. We will buy when we like the companies."

Jordan is considered top heavy and expensive. Its stock market is influenced by Israel's and is down 9 per cent this year. Lebanon, emerging from years of civil war starting to produce new issues. It only has a handful of listed stocks so far, but Solidere, a conglomerate with property interests, is being listed in Global Depository Receipt form shortly. This will give foreign investors their first opportunity to own Lebanese property.

The oil-rich Arab states are, in the main, not open for investment and are more a source than a sink for capital. Bahrain and Oman, however, allow foreign investment and fund managers including F&C have investments there.

The wealth of the Middle East means local investors sometimes push prices higher than foreign investors would like. Despite this and the less than sparkling performance of stock markets recently, fund managers are paying the region more attention and expect to be doing more business there.

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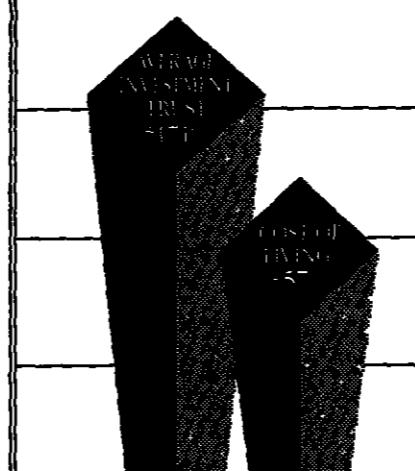
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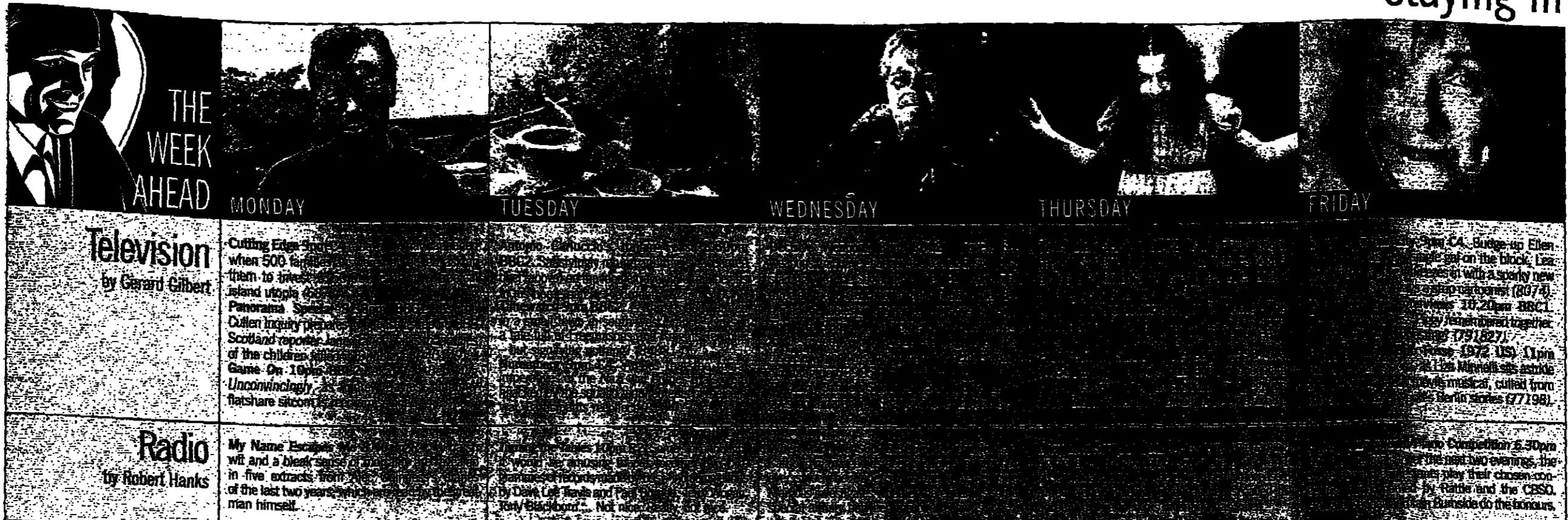
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Television

by Gerard Gilbert

MONDAY

Cutting Edge: John Nettleton's new show when 500 guests are invited to him to discuss the latest news from the Island. Upfront: David Cullen (left) interviews Scotland's most famous son of the children's author, Roald Dahl. Game On: A game show. Unconscionably: A new flatshare sitcom.

TUESDAY

My Name Escapes Me: A wit and a bleak sense of humour in five extracts from the best of the last two years, written by David Low, Tom Stoppard, Tony Bradman... Not recommended.

WEDNESDAY

Shameless: The new series of the hit sitcom. The Week in the Life: David Aaronovitch's weekly round-up of the week's best and worst news stories. The Week in the Life: David Aaronovitch's weekly round-up of the week's best and worst news stories.

THURSDAY

Shameless: The new series of the hit sitcom. The Week in the Life: David Aaronovitch's weekly round-up of the week's best and worst news stories. The Week in the Life: David Aaronovitch's weekly round-up of the week's best and worst news stories.

Radio

by Robert Hanks

Shameless: The new series of the hit sitcom. The Week in the Life: David Aaronovitch's weekly round-up of the week's best and worst news stories.

BBC1

7.45 Moomin (R) (9964689).
8.10 Playdays (R) (S) (917950).
8.30 Breakfast with Frost (548444).
9.30 Heart to Heart (S) (6514573).
9.45 First Light (S) (720283).
10.15 See Heart (R) (S) (454592).
10.45 The Season (R) (1646379).
11.10 The Natural World (R) (S) (5731931).
12.00 Countryfile (Including Weather for the Week Ahead) (S) (32283).
12.30 News, Thinktank. Do children suffer from being raised by only one parent? The Independent's David Aaronovitch discusses that and related issues with Sarah Hogg and Tessa Blackstone. Last in series (51009). *

1.30 EastEnders Omnibus (S) (5859202). *

2.55 The Flintstones (1725221). *

3.20 Bitsback (S) (7339176). *

4.00 Norma Major: Behind Closed Doors. My word, they're trying to push this woman – John Major's "stealth bomber" in the upcoming election campaign. But quite what the BBC is doing soft-pedalling Norma is quite a different matter. David Frost has the questions (S) (660). *

4.30 Junior MasterChef 96. The judges are Michael Elphick and Charles Fontaine of the Quality Chop House (S) (4424). *

5.00 People's Century. The second great tranche of this ambitious series, which tries to set the century's great events through the words of ordinary folk, returns with the Cold War (S) (7173844). *

5.55 News, Weather (192757). *

6.15 Regional News (548573). *

6.20 Songs of Praise. Worship from Horsham in Sussex (S) (818660). *

6.55 The Great Antiques Hunt. Jilly Goolden and fellow-seekers visit Liverpool (S) (151047). *

7.40 Pie in the Sky. (New Series) Return of the slumming restaurateur played by Richard Griffiths (S) (341844). *

8.30 Rhodes. 1/8. See Preview, p28 (S) (40221). *

10.00 News, Weather (874176). *

10.15 The Mrs Merton Show. The comedy agony aunt interviews/observes Germaine Greer, PJ and Duncan and Michael Parkinson (R) (S) (304844). *

10.45 Science Friction. The ethics of genetic engineering (S) (210047). *

11.35 Eye of the Needle. (Richard Marquand 1981 UK). Ken Follett's yarn about D-Day wrecking Nazi agent, Donald Sutherland, stranded on a Scottish island and falling in love with local woman Kate Nelligan. Ian Bannen and Christopher Cazenove co-star (446931). *

1.25 The Sky at Night. Neptune (S) (837697). *

1.45 Weather (7879871). To 1.50am.

BBC2

6.15 Open University: Perspectives (2212912).
6.40 Maths Methods (5945711). 7.05 Social Problems and Social Welfare (7156641). 7.30 Healing the Spine (996776). 7.55 Shopshire in the Sixteenth Century (2119312). 8.20 Acid Rain (916028). * 8.45 The Spanish Chapel, Florence (2577370). * 9.10 Children's BBC: The Littlest Pet Shop. 9.30 Fully Booked.

12.00 Sunday Grandstand. 12.05 The Great North Run: coverage of the 13-mile race between Newcastle and South Shields. 2.35 Tennis: the final of the Bournemouth International Open. 3.05 Racing from Longchamp: the Arc Trials. 3.15 Tennis. 3.35 Racing. 3.45 Tennis. 4.05 Racing. 4.15 Tennis. 4.45 News Round-Up (S) (265047).

5.00 News Round-Up (S) (1313573). *

5.15 Rugby Special. John Inverdale introduces

highlights of Northampton v Bristol (S) (575080). *

6.15 Rough Guide to the World. Magenta De Vine and Simon O'Brien check out Russia, five years after the fall of communism – including the Moscow nightclubs with the £6,500 entry fee (S) (542115). *

6.55 Safe with Us. The final part of Niall Dickson's history of the Thatcher reforms of the NHS, which finds the line between the new trust hospitals and private health care becoming increasingly blurred (159689). *

7.40 The Immortal Emperor. Dr Tony Sparrowthorne examines the legend that the first emperor of China used his extraordinary wealth and power to attempt to attain everlasting life (S) (249486). *

8.30 Later Presents: Brit Beat. Jools Holland introduces a compilation of live studio performances from the likes of Oasis, Pulp and Radiohead (S) (90486). *

9.30 Stephen and Son (R) (71660). *

10.00 19.00 Hour of the Gun (John Sturges 1967 US). Sturges's overlooked western, charting the moral decline of Wyatt Earp (and with him the Old West) from upright lawman to grimacing moral avenger. James Garner is a surprising change of pace and tone in Earp, supported by Jason Robards, Robert Ryan and Jon Voight (129592).

11.40 19.00 The Survivor (Alex Van Warmerdam 1992 Neth). Bizarre fantasy set in an incomplete

housing project in 1960 (Followed by Wearaway) (S) (982318). To 1.25am.

2.00 The Learning Zone: Summer Nights: Who Learns Wins/Making Time (45581). 4.00 Languages: Introducing Deutsch Plus/The French Experience (02245). 5.00 Making Time (31790). 5.30 Business Matters (53871). To 6.00am.

REGIONS. Wales: 5.15pm Scrum. 5.30pm Sportscene Rugby Special.

Choice

Music as the expression of idealised love is the theme of The Fool on the Bridge (6.30pm R3), a selection of music by the Provengal troubadour Bertrand de Ventadour. Same thing, only a bit less refined, in Rock Wives (7pm R1), in which Miranda Sawyer talks to, among others, Patsy Kensit (left).

9.50 Weather

10.00 News.

10.15 Medicine Now.

10.45 Breakfast.

11.15 The Spirit of America. Carol Phillips talks to Professor John Hope Franklin (115).

11.45 Seeds of Faith.

12.00 News.

12.20 Bells on Sunday.

12.30 Late Story: Tracy, Written and read by Cari Tighe.

12.48 Shipping Forecast.

1.00-6.00am As World Service.

Radio 5

6.00-9.00am R5

6.00am Brian Hayes

6.05 Sunday with Matt

6.35 Special Assignment

6.45 The Big Eye

6.50 Sunday's Up

6.55 News Extra 7.35 The

7.00 8.00 Clear the Air 8.35 Mr

7.30 8.00 Brian Hayes 10.05 The Acid

7.35 8.00 Morris Bagging 11.00

Night Extra 12.15 SportsAmerica

12.30 8.00 Moves 2.05 Up All

8.00-5.00-6.00am Morning Reports

Classic FM

6.00-10.00am R6

6.00am Sarah Lucas 9.00 Ro-

mance 12.00 Celebrity Choice 1.00

Alan Mann 3.00 Masterclass 4.00

Discoveries 7.00 Top 10 8.00

World Opera: Verdi: La Traviata

10.00 Howard's Week 12.00 Andre

Leon 4.00-6.00am Mark Griffiths

5.00 Poetry Please!

5.50 Shipping Forecast

5.55 Weather

6.00 6.00am Clock News 1/4

6.15 6.00am Gerry's Bar 1/4

6.30 Business

7.00 Children's BBC Radio 4: The Silver Chair

7.30 Reading Aloud. Tenby by Nor-

man Lewis

8.00 FM10 The Natural History Pro-

gramme

8.00 (1W) Open University: The

New Curiosity Shop – Explaining

Galaxies 8.30 Diamonds

Rust and a Handful of Sand

9.00 American Conversations:

Norm Chomsky 9.20 Questions

of Labour Identity 9.40 Talking

about the Enlightenment

8.30 (FM10) That's History

9.00 (FM10) Fourth Column Revis-

ed 9.30 Companion to the Co-

mics: John Grisham examines some

of the ideas relating to the fast

million-billion of a second after our

universe was born. (3/5)

Satellite

SAT ONE

6.00am Hour of Power (8793). 12.00 Mix 25/4051. 1.00 Star Trek (87975). 2.00 Marvel Action Hour (72912). 3.00 Star Trek Deep Space Nine (15192). 4.00 WWF (27399). 5.00 Great Escapes (42424). 5.20 Mighty Morphin Power Rangers (67270). 6.00 The Simpson (6450). 7.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (8651). 8.00 The X-Files Re-Opened (31020). 9.00 Stephen King's The Langoliers (41467). 11.00 Manhunter (55292). 12.00 60 Minutes (77161). 1.00 Sunday Comix (55036). 2.00-6.00am Hit Mix Long Play (429254).

SAT TWO

7.00 19.00 Xena: Warrior Princess (4282979). 8.00 Melrose Place (421439). 9.00 Poldark (1978). 11.00 The Legend (1995) (86175). 12.00 Meteor Man (1993) (45283). 4.00 Robin Hood: Men in Tights (1993) (42820). 6.00 Another Stakeout (1993) (65047). 8.00 Day of Reckoning (1994) (60592). 10.00 Guyver: Dark Hero (1992) (52584). 11.40 The Movie Show (52584). 12.10 Hotel (1992) (2218087). 2.30 Deadly Invasion: The Killer Bed Nightmare (1994) (256573). 4.00-6.00am Hit Me Long Play (8331245). 7.00 Shopping (6216328).

SAT MOVIES

6.10am Hans the Stone Boy (1984) (27825). 4.00 The Adventures of the Wilderness Family (1975) (65529). 6.00 Roller Boogies (1979) (14746). 12.00 Pocahontas (1995) (86175). 2.00 Meteor Man (1993) (45283). 4.00 Robin Hood: Men in Tights (1993) (42820). 6.00 Another Stakeout (1993) (65047). 8.00 Day of Reckoning (1994) (60592). 10.00 Guyver: Dark Hero (1992) (52584). 11.40 The Movie Show (52584). 12.10 Hotel (1992) (2218087). 2.30 Deadly Invasion: The Killer Bed Nightmare (1994) (256573). 4.



The big picture

Unforgiven

Sat 9pm ITV

For years, the Hollywood intelligentsia derided Clint Eastwood (above) as a "shoot-'em-up" cowboy. More recently, however, he has been re-appraised and recognised as the fine moviemaker he is. He finally gained acceptance, and a Stetson-full of Oscars, with this bleakly compelling western. It features Eastwood as a former hitman, William Munny, who comes out of retirement in search of one last bout. This brings him into bloody conflict with an old foe, a sheriff known as Little Bill (Gene Hackman).

Why the hell is the BBC soft-selling Norma Major (Norma Major, *Behind Closed Doors*, Sun 4pm BBC1)? Are the go-craven that they don't realise that *Stonewall* is the stealth-bomber of the '90s? The *Emperor*? OK, so there's a harder one. What is the difference between a civil servant and a baboon?

Surprisingly, *unforgiven*, according to *Equinox: The Great Levels* (Sun 8pm), when it comes to life and death issues, junior civil mandarins may not go round showing their bottoms to senior Whitehall mandarins – or, indeed, anyone – but both civil servants and baboons are strictly hierarchical societies, and both mandarins have been copiously studied in an experiment to see whether race affects life expectancy. It does. But bluntly, if you are at the top of the pile, you can expect to live longer – and be freer of disease. Subordinacy can be bad for your health. Great inequalities of wealth within society can also affect life expectancy, which is why Britain in the Blitz was a surprisingly healthy place – out of the way of the Luftwaffe, that is.

Cecil Rhodes died at the tender age of 49 and you can't get much further up the pile than he did. Having founded De Beers' diamond cartel, Rhodes became only the second individual in history to have a country named after him (Simon Bolivar was the other one), and, surely enough, Rhodes (Sun BBC1) is the most expensive BBC drama ever, an epic eight-part weighing in at more than £1 million an episode. And all this to depict the man. Filmed in Nelson Mandela's South Africa, *Rhodes* comes stamped with the approval of both Mandela and Robert Mugabe, while Martin Shaw talks in the publicity material about interviewing him as a combination of "Hitler, Napoleon and Saddam Hussein".

Not that you can't see the point. *Rhodes* (Sun 8pm) (see *Equinox*), starring Grant Bowden, Joe Shaw as the young Rhodes. He goes to Africa for his health, and, coinciding with blue-eyed racism, takes over the burgeoning diamond industry. Anthony Thomas's script also implies that Rhodes was homosexual. I wouldn't want to be on the BBC complaints switchboard on Sunday evenings this autumn.

Fine Cut Sat 9pm BBC2

Equinox Sun 7pm C4

The Immortal Emperor Sun 7.40pm BBC2

Rhodes Sun 8.30pm BBC1

The South Bank Show Sun 10.45pm ITV

Heroic in a quieter way are the Jordan family, fourth generation farmers from Iowa, now facing foreclosure as the US farms crisis lumps on into the 1990s. The *Fine Cut* documentary, "Troublesome Creek: a Midwestern" (Sat BBC2) was made by the Jordans' daughter, Jeanne, and watches as her parents auction everything they have – everything except their land, that is, to stave off the banks.

Apparently only three performers can guarantee to sell out the Opera House in Blackpool – Shirley Bassey, Ken Dodd and Victoria Wood. The *South Bank Show* (Sun ITV) goes on the road with Britain's first stand-up comedienne to find out why. Wood herself puts it down to women thinking she's their best friend. That from a performer who admits to notliking to see individuals in her audience. The *Immortal Emperor* (Sun BBC2), meanwhile, goes back 2,000 years to find out what you give the man who really does have everything – in this case the Emperor Qin Shi Huang. Why, immortality, of course – although as emperor, Qin Shi could at least have hoped to live longer than his mandarins – and any local baboons.



The big match

Newcastle Utd v Blackburn Rovers

Sat 10.50pm BBC1

How Blackburn Rovers must be ruing the departure of star striker Alan Shearer (above) to Newcastle United. Since he moved to his home town, before the season began, Blackburn have been a shadow of their former selves. From four games so far they have a solitary point. The last player they probably feel like encountering this afternoon is Shearer, especially as his new team are a high after mid-week success in the Uefa Cup. Expect Shearer to show no mercy to his old team mates.

Saturday television and radio

BBC1

7.25 News, Weather (2180/645).
7.30 Children's BBC: Oscar's Orchestra. 7.55 Robinson Sucro. 8.15 The Raccoons. 8.40 Marvel Action Hour.
9.45 Top of the Pops (R) (S) (887578). *
10.15 Children's BBC: The Flintstones. 10.45 Clarissa Explains It All. 11.10 Grange Hill. 11.30 Sweet Valley High. 11.55 The O Zone.
12.12 Weather (7209508).
12.15 Grandstand. 12.20 Football Focus. 1.00 News. 1.05 Cricket Focus. 1.25 Touring Cars. The penultimate meeting of the Auto Trader RAC British Touring Car Championship from Donington. 1.55 International Tennis: the semi-finals of the relaunched Bournemouth International Open from the West Hants Club. 2.10 Racing from Goodwood. 2.25 Tennis. 2.40 Racing from Goodwood: the 2.45 Westminster Tax Insurance Select Stakes. 2.55 Tennis. 3.15 Racing from Goodwood: the 3.20 William Hill Sprint Cup Stakes. 3.30 Tennis. 3.50 Football Half-times. 3.55 Racing from Leopardsdown: the 4.00 Irish Champion Stakes from Leopardsdown. 4.05 Tennis. 4.40 Final Score (S) (7209506).
5.20 News, Weather (3478004). *
5.30 Regional News and Weather (412085).
5.35 Dad's Army (R) (413153). *
6.05 Jim Davidson's Generation Game (S) (388356). *
7.05 Due South (S) (879578). *
7.50 The National Lottery Live. Harry Connick Jr helps make someone's night (S) (593937).
8.05 Casualty. (New Series). A young woman is admitted with a panic attack after her young children disappear, but that's only a background story for the week's main event – the arrival of Baz and Charlie's baby (S) (794202). *
8.55 News and Sport, Weather (Followed by National Lottery Update) (801820). *
9.15 BBC Proms 1996: The Last Night of the Proms (With Radio 3). The second part of tonight's concert, linked via a giant screen to an audience in Hyde Park (which means, sure as anything, that it's going to rain). Music by Glazunov, Arnold, Offenbach, Berlioz and Puccini precedes the traditional linguistic fare – including "Land of Hope and Glory", "Rule Britannia" and "Jerusalem". (Subsequent programmes may run late) (S) (1927267).
10.50 Match of the Day. Newcastle Utd v Blackburn Rovers. See *The Big Match*, above (S) (3265646). *
11.55 They Think It's All Over. Last Thursday's edition of the comedy sports quiz (R) (S) (4588004). *
12.25 Stand and Deliver. Ramon Menendez 1988 US). The true story of Los Angeles teacher Jaime Escalante and the idiosyncratic methods he used to inspire a class of tough street teenagers. Starring Edward James Olmos, Lou Diamond Phillips and Andy Garcia (419047). *
2.05 Weather (5485115). To 2.10am.

BBC2

6.00 Open University: Errors Aren't Forever (2257085). 6.25 Modelling Pollution (2269820). 6.50 Synthesis of Drug (5214563). 7.15 Nature Display'd: Women, Nature and the Enlightenment (7110849). 7.40 Electrons and Photons (9996288). 8.05 Rural Life: Victorian Farming (9552248). 8.30 Tradition and History (2512443). 8.55 Overture: Dimanche en Anjou (2531578). 9.20 Japanese Education: Changing the Mould (6502761). 9.45 History of Crime (2846265). 10.10 Air Pollution (5171721). 10.35 Experiments and Energy (1648337). 11.00 Fighting Rust in Your Car (5498462). 11.25 Italian Universities (5578054). 11.50 Refining the View (3314424). *
12.15 Global Warming (738549).
12.20 Film 96 with Barry Norman (S) (4420117). *
12.50 *One Touch of Venus*. (William Aitken 1948 US). A young man (Robert Walker) grows to love a statue of Venus in a department store window, and has his dreams come true when it comes to life as Ava Gardner (2562172).
2.10 *Susan Slept Here*. (Frank Tashlin 1954 US). Penniless Hollywood scriptwriter Dick Powell agrees to look after a rebellious teenager, Debbie Reynolds, to help his film research in this sparky sex comedy (247511).
2.50 *Caprice* (Frank Tashlin 1967 US). Doris Day and Richard Harris make unlikely co-stars in this high-Sixties espionage bunkum (854642).
5.20 International Tennis: The semi-finals of the Bournemouth International Open (S) (9409530). 6.05 TOTP 2. Return of the show mixing contemporary hits with golden oldies (S) (738337).
6.55 *The Car's the Star*. Quentin Wilson on the Reliant three-wheeler (S) (753004). *
7.15 News and Sport, Weather (335882). *
7.30 BBC Proms 1996: The Last Night of the Proms (With Radio 3). Featuring Haydn's *Te Deum*, a new concerto by Paul Rudes, Mozart arias, Shostakovich's Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and Strings (*Continues on BBC1*) (S) (935339).
8.50 *Close Up*. JG Ballard scores a scene from *Sunset Boulevard*, while Mary Whitehouse reveals her fondness for *Brief Encounter* (S) (160085). *
9.00 *Fine Cut: Troublesome Creek*. See *Preview*, above (S) (1545). *
10.30 *The Razor's Edge* (Edmund Goulding 1948 US). American pilot Bill Murray survives the Great War and embarks on a journey to find the meaning of life in this anachronistic remake of the 1946 Iffy Power movie based on Somerset Maugham's novel. Theresa Russell, Dennis Elliott and Peter Vaughan co-star (S) (7046568).
12.25 *My Night with Maud* (Eric Rohmer 1969 Fr). The third of Rohmer's Moral Tales has smug engineer Jean-Louis Trintignant hoping to make a "good" Catholic marriage, but finding himself drawn to the free-thinking divorcee of the title (Followed by Weatherview) (724641). To 2.25am.

ITV/London

6.00 GMTV 6.00 Home in the Hole. 6.20 Professor Bubble. 6.40 Bug Alert. 7.00 News. 7.10 Disney's *Wake Up in the Wild Room*. 8.20 Gangsters. 8.55 Masked Ride (0595207).
9.25 Wow. The electronic childminder hosted by Simeon Coode and Sophie Aldred. Special guests are heart-throb Dieter Brummer (alias Shane in *Home and Away*), Michael Jackson's singing nephews 3T, "rocking grannie" Bessie Lawrence and music from The Cardigans. (S) (1443817).
11.00 *The Noise*. Andi Peters talks to Sandra Bullock, while Michael Jackson's nephews, 3T (again, see above), are the studio guests (S) (6356).
11.30 *The Chart Show* (S) (45998).
12.30 *Move on*. Young people discuss illiteracy (22917).
1.00 News and Weather (7642562). *
1.05 Local News, Weather (7642498). *
1.10 Movies, Games and Videos (1605581).
1.45 *Cartoon Time* (4528799).
2.00 *Baywatch* (R) (S) (2041733). *
2.55 *Alivolt* (R) (2652202).
3.55 *Thunder in Paradise*. Adventure series set in south Florida (S) (6001530).
4.45 *News, Sport, Weather* (7642498). *
5.05 *London Tonight*. Sports Results (Followed by *LWT Weather*) (A14989). *
5.20 *Body Heat*. Fitness freaks are put through their paces (S) (568801). *
7.25 *The Big, Big Talent Show* (Including Lottery Result) (S) (565462).
8.15 *Family Fortunes*. Two families compete for cash and other prizes. Les Dennis gets to wear the spangly jacket (S) (936443). *
8.45 *News, Weather, Lottery Result* (Followed by *LWT Weather*) (A14989). *
9.00 *Unforgiven* (Clint Eastwood 1992 US). See *The Big Picture*, above (S) (2411733). *
11.25 *Dirty Harry* (Don Siegel 1971 US). Siegel's taut and exciting attack on liberal values, in which one-man vigilante police force Clint Eastwood rides the streets of San Francisco of a low-down rapist and murderer, who also happens to be a hippy (Andy Robinson). The wonderfully apt electronic score is by Lalo Schifrin (727127). *
11.45 *Funny Business*. Jim Smith and more stand-up comedy round-ups (S) (28414).
1.45 *Tropical Heat*. Nick meets a mysterious woman who claims she can foresee murders (9174405).
2.40 *The Chart Show* (R) (S) (200347).
3.35 *E! News Review* (5865234).
4.25 *Night Shift* (57277931).
4.30 *God's Gift* (R) (3455318).
5.20 *Night Shift* (R) (S) (9857196).
5.30 *News* (80592). To 6.00am.

Channel 4

6.05 *Sesame Street* (R) (2993838).
6.55 *The Magic School Bus* (R) (S) (4549424).
7.30 *The Ferals* (S) (15714).
8.00 *Transworld Sport* (61795).
9.00 *The Morning Line*. Which nags to back (55068).
11.00 *Bilz*. American football magazine (24462).
12.00 *Pavilions* (S) (5718202).
12.25 *Danger Within* (Don Chaffey 1960 UK). Ingenious combination of Pow-escape film and whodunnit, from the novel *Death in Captivity* by Michael Gilbert. With Richard Todd, Bernard Lee and Richard Attenborough. (S) (5571240). *
2.50 *Champion 4* Racing from Doncaster and Leopardstown. Brough Scott introduces. 3.05 (D) *Polypte Flying Children's States*; the 3.40 (D) *Perthshire St Leger Stakes*; the 4.00 (D) *Guinness Champion Cup*; the 4.15 (D) *Ladbrokes H'cap*; 4.45 (D) *Parcelsong* (S) (15642172).
5.05 *Brookside* (R) (S) (2557240).
6.30 *Right to Reply* (S) (221822). *
7.05 *The People's Parliament*. Debate the following: "Communities should have the legal right to be notified when a child sex offender moves into their neighbourhood" (S) (490605). *
8.00 *Botticelli's Primavera*. Entertaining documentary about the art historians who have tried to uncover the secrets of Botticelli's masterpiece. See *Preview*, above (S) (22693). *
9.00 *ER*. The New Year spirit struggles to uplift Lewis (Sherry Stringfield) (R) (S) (130917).
9.55 *Father Ted*. Mr Benson's woes goes missing (R) (S) (565530). *
10.25 *NYPD Blue*. The second series of the influential Steven Bochco police drama begins a re-run. With David Caruso (R) (S) (803172). *
11.25 *Dyke TV*: Rachel Williams. A new late-night strand reflecting various aspects of lesbianism. The series kicks off with an intimate portrait of supermodel Rachel Williams (S) (725758).
11.50 *Dyke TV*: Dyke Stand. Eva Weber subverts the well-known coffee advert (S) (629337).
11.55 *Dyke TV*: Zero Budget. Exploring the "explosion" of new lesbian feature film-makers in the US (S) (449578).
12.30 *Go Fish*. (Rose Troche 1994 US). Fairly miraculous low-budget comedy about love and match-making among the lesbian community. With T Wendy Macmillan (S) (54554).
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An unhealthy market in sensational lives

What makes an author, according to Steiner, is the desire not so much for contemporary fame as posthumous glory – to leave behind printed words that will live again in the eye and mind of a future reader. The poets of old hankered after a place on Par-nassus; their writing was their passport to immortality. What lifts the vision of a great artist is an eye that sees not just a contemporary subject but also contains posterity's need to think a little more about the mechanisms by which writers and artists "live on".

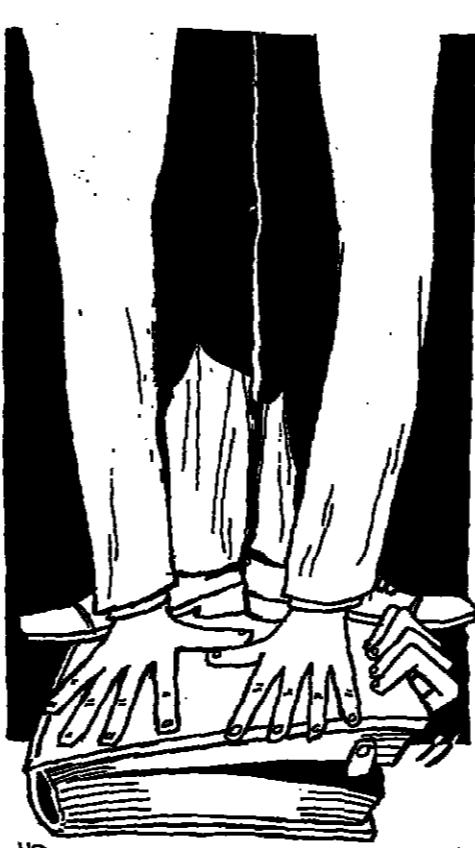
We are living through a biography boom and it has been a busy few days for what can only be called biographical news. Lord Runcie of St Albans is, after all, still alive, though he has implied since his biography's publication he wishes he were dead – a message relentlessly and rather unpleasantly rammed home by the newspaper that bought up the book. The former archbishop could, easily enough, have given an interview on the radio containing his various *bon mots* about the heir to the throne and clergymen of a gay disposition. Instead his biographer has been the conduit. Robert Runcie thus becomes Humphrey Carpenter's Robert Runcie and we are left wondering whether the correspondence between the two is perfect.

Lord Runcie is in a position to contradict

his biographer though if he does he runs the risk of denying what Mr Carpenter wisely had him previously commit to tape. Other subjects are not so fortunate. Some, like Ben Pimlott's Queen (coming shortly) just never reply. Others are merely dead. Dead subjects are certainly safer, since they are beyond the reach of George Carman QC. About, say, Buddy Holly, Philip Norman can effectively say what he likes. But what he has to do – in the intensely competitive biography stakes – is come up with something that arrests attention. That, given modern tastes, usually means sexual deviation or excess.

So a danger in the rise of biography as a literary form which sells itself by sensation is that lives become badly distorted by the requirements of the literary market: what happens in bedrooms, or in notebooks, is given too much weight, what happens elsewhere too little. Post-Freudian biography runs a constant risk of prurientism. Fine artists, writers, politicians, adventurers have their sexual lives subjected to hyperventilating prose. Often, when the biographer is not guilty, the publicity machine around the book is. Thus Roy Jenkins's admirable recent biography of Gladstone is helpfully distinguished in the market from HG Matthews's recent life by "stories" about the great man's nocturnal visits.

There are other worries about the public's apparently insatiable appetite for written



lives. If biography represents a kind of literary reflection of the triumph of individualism as a political philosophy it is as suspect a version of historical truth as untrammelled individualism is in our economic and social lives. Buddy Holly may be a pop music innovator whose death gave him a special aura but he is hardly comprehensible outside the song-writing and recording industry as it was in the late 1950s: raising him to romantic superhero status belittles the army of precursors without whom that would not have been the day.

The modern cult of biography may be, as some have suggested, a specific and necessary reaction against movements in academia – the dry deconstructionists, unreadable fourth-generation Marxists and such who would scrub and unpick literary texts as if their authors had no real being or intentions or underpants.

But could it be that too much biography is bad for us? Yes, if it means that reading the easy, gossipy life becomes a substitute for reading the works, or if difficult, fascinating men and women are evicted from their contexts and turned into characters in ersatz novels.

Biography is unhealthy too to the extent that it feeds British nostalgia, sacrificing achievement and action in the here and now for contemplation of the past. The cult of biography may encourage a "dwarves on the shoulders of giants" mentality in which we

demean and downsize our expectations and aspirations, believing that there are no longer any Greats. John Major is, true, no Peel and Paddy Ashdown's relationship to William Ewart Gladstone is somewhat distant. It is, however, an invalid conclusion that we live in an age of political, artistic and literary pygmies. Some of those modern politicians are doubtless even now polishing their notes and diaries with a view to helping the biographical scavengers ever on the look-out for a good, untold life. Perhaps one day, our children will troop out to buy the third blockbuster life of Damien Hirst, or the new line on that endlessly fascinating *fin de siècle* giant, Salman Rushdie.

It may be that biography is essentially a secondary, Silver Age kind of writing, inherently lesser than fiction, poetry, history or philosophy. But in the end, the market rules here as everywhere else. And for all the drawbacks of the biography boom, it has some cheering and redeeming features. It may draw millions into the primary texts, proceeding from reading about Virginia Woolf's sex life to reading Virginia Woolf's books. It fills papers with gossip that hurts less – mostly – than investigative muck-raking in living lives. And it gives us a cast of characters, constantly revised, that add up to a huge extended national family. If this is a vice, there are worse ones.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Still a role for Church of England as church of all the nation

Sir: Your leading article "Antidisestablishmentarianism Confounded" (11 September) does you no credit.

Your arguments for casting the Church of England people adrift are made without regard for the consequences. There are some 16,000 churches they are located in communities. The presence of the parish church is important to the community and the parish church is there and available by right of Establishment for all persons who live within the parish. The loss of those rights should not be underestimated. It is true of course that worshippers may not be the majority of the population. They probably never have been. Our Lord said his followers should be yeast or salt and the reality is you do not want too much of either.

Abortion: a choice of poll questions

Sir: Why Dawn Primarolo and her colleagues (letter, 7 September) so fiercely defensive of liberal abortion if they are correct in their interpretation of opinion polls?

By promoting polls which hinge on the word "choice", the pro-abortion lobby has repeatedly claimed that pro-life MPs are out of touch with public opinion. When asked on what grounds they believe abortion should be allowed, the majority of people reject abortion on demand. Only 31 per cent of respondents to a Gallup poll in 1993 agreed that abortion should be available on demand. In August this year an NOP poll for the *Sunday Times* showed that 64 per cent of respondents thought that Britain's abortion law should be reviewed in the light of medical advances. Only 26 per cent thought that the present law was adequate.

Jane Roe of the Abortion Law Reform Association has admitted that pro-abortionists use the word "choice" because fewer people favour "abortion on request" than "choice", and that "you say 'abortion on demand' it's fewer still". (Radio 4, 2 May 1996)

In the light of evidence on foetal sentience and the recent selective killing of a twin, opposition to the parliamentary campaign to restore a meaningful degree of protection to unborn children is becoming ever harder for the pro-abortionists to justify.

JOHN SWEATON
National Director
The Society for the Protection of
Unborn Children
London SW1

Slaughter at sea

Sir: The shocking news last week that 67,000 sheep were burnt or drowned at sea after a fire on the ship carrying them from Australia to the Middle East quite rightly caused outrage.

Live sheep exports from Australia commenced over 20 years ago and currently more than five million sheep are exported annually from Australia, mostly to the Middle East. On average, 120,000 animals will spend up to six weeks on board each carrier, confined in appalling conditions.

The World Society for the Protection of Animals, together with our Australian member organisations, has campaigned for a number of years to get this live transport stopped. Incidents such as this are not uncommon this is the third live sheep carrier to sink following a fire and there have been many other cases of heavy losses due to starvation or suffocation.

ANDREW DICKSON
Chief Executive
World Society for the Protection of
Animals
London SW8



Axle cheerleader: The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem meeting Hitler in wartime Germany. Photograph: Keystone

Jews, Arabs and stolen Nazi gold

Sir: Dr Ghada Karmi (Letters, 12 September) says that the Palestinian Arabs were "dispossessed in 1948 to make way for the creation of a Jewish refuge in their country".

Does Dr Karmi really think that the Jews have no historical claim on a land which they inhabited for 2,000 years before the Arabs first appeared in Palestine (in the 7th century AD) – a land which they never ceased to claim as their own, and which they continued to inhabit in whatever numbers were allowed by successive occupying powers?

The Palestinians certainly have a claim also, and the Jews were prepared to accept the partition plan proposed by the UN in 1947. The Arabs, however, rejected the plan, and five Arab nations attempted to settle the matter by force. They could hardly complain if this resort to violence resulted in a disposition of territory that was not to their liking, and it is pleasing that

Palestinian willingness to compromise now provides hope of a just settlement between two peoples both of which have valid historical rights. Those who rejected this compromise, however, should admit that their real objection to Jewish sovereignty is not political but religious: by Muslim religious law, Jews must be satisfied with subordinate status (*dhimmi*) and must never aspire to independence in territory declared to be holy to Islam. It is this religious motivation that lies behind the historical falsifications.

HYAM MACCOBY
Kew, Surrey

Sir: Certainly, the Palestinians should have a share in the Nazi gold – they earned it! Their wartime spiritual leader, Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, spent much of his time in Berlin, praising Hitler and broadcasting encouragement to German forces in the Middle East.

MS R L HART
London NW11

Sir: The change of heart of Swiss authorities in co-operating with investigations into Nazi loot ("Swiss ask: 'Where is that stolen gold?'", 11 September) would have been more creditable if the documents which stirred them had been uncovered in Switzerland rather than the United States.

If similar goodwill had been demonstrated earlier, many intended beneficiaries of accounts opened by Jews during the Holocaust would have been able to settle claims which have been outstanding for decades.

Fresh legislation in Switzerland should aim to do more than assist inquiries that draw upon archives which are more freely accessible abroad. In addition to tracing accounts and their legitimate inheritors, it should seek out the identified residue of unclaimed accounts of similar provenance, to establish a fund for surviving victims of the Holocaust and other war crimes.

ROBERT WOKLER
Manchester

Cultural riches of Radio 3 no substitute for helping the poor

Sir: Marianne Macdonald shows she lives far from the real world by suggesting that financing Radio 3 by a tax is the same as financing unemployment pay or sick pay out of taxation ("Why we should all pay to Radio 3 etc", 11 September). The effect on her of withdrawing tax finance for Radio 3 would probably be that it became more like Classic FM, and she might have to buy more CDs to get the music she wanted to hear. But an unemployed

person losing benefit would be unable to buy food, heat and shelter. There is an old principle that government expenditure should be progressive rather than regressive – it is better to transfer resources from the rich to the poor than vice-versa. Financing Radio 3 out of the licence fee is an example of regressive expenditure; indeed, the licence fee is a regressive tax.

DAVID SAWERS
Littlehampton, West Sussex

Sir: Well said, Marianne Macdonald. Her warning about what may happen to Radio 3 if its producers try to survive without public funding cannot be too often repeated. When I lived in Boston I sometimes tuned in to a local classical music station and heard the announcers pleading with listeners for donations to pay for the next record: a classical jukebox of the airwaves. As often as not we listened to nothing.

JOHN ROE
York

Criminals fear cops on bikes

Sir: You could do well to examine the effect of just one bicycle-based policeman per shift in the Jesmond area of Newcastle upon Tyne ("Country police lose out as cash goes to cities", 7 September). Using the bicycle as an intermediate level of coverage between a foot and car patrol, operated both day and night, and in all weathers, a reduction in crime of 32 per cent has been achieved. Other forces have put community policemen on bikes, but frequently this is an optional way of doing the shift, sidestepped if it's dark or raining. Newcastle is the only example I have discovered which mirrors the success of over 1,200 police forces in the USA, who have reported dramatic improvements in crime control by introducing bike-cops.

Most US bike-cops have training in bike control and pursuit to give confidence for the descent of steep slopes under freeway bridges, and prevent the embarrassment of falling off at the feet of an offender in a bungled dismount. The International Police Mountain Bike Association provides a clearing house for such training courses. Membership extends to police forces in Russia and Australia.

The first of the new bike-cops started in 1987 in Seattle, and achieved twice the arrest rate with three bikes than the nine foot patrols on the same unit were managing, and equalising the whole precinct's car-based officers. In Salt Lake City the ability to cover an area 20 times a night, against the one or two foot patrols, delivered an 80 per cent reduction in car break-ins. Santa Barbara's epidemic of purse-snatching and parking-lot thefts evaporated when a silent, swift bike-cop replaced the coffee-swilling doughnut-eating copulant cop in a car.

DAVE HOLLADAY
Glasgow

Hidden child abuse

Sir: Perhaps the decrease in child abuse deaths is not as great as research suggests (Significant Shorts, 5 September).

In my district of work as a consultant paediatrician, there have been two suspicious child deaths within the past two years and neither has been formally registered as a child abuse death. The child protection register has never been an accurate statistic of incidence of abuse – it simply records those children who have been case-conferenced and a decision made to register the case.

Certainly, the Government is currently using inadequate research to "fudge" the real incidence of child abuse. Local authorities are encouraged not to register cases reported by consultant paediatricians and others but to deem referrals as children in need of family support. Dr GRAINE EVANS
Farnham, Kent

Unseen picture

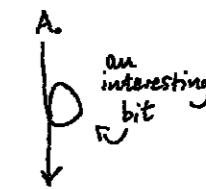
Sir: You gave in to the new fundamentalism yourself, printing an unrelated picture to illustrate Suzanne Moore's front-page article on 12 September. Until you print Mapplethorpe's *Rosie*, you stand guilty of hypocrisy.

PATRICK WORMS
Brussels

Sir: If satire is the gumboot diplomacy of our time (headline, 13 September), do the Americans also intend to wield a big stick to blast the Iraqis out of the skies?

CHARLES WROE

mean to meander. It is not a working weekday column which should go (pace Lawrence Sterne) like this:



This, of course, is different from the serious column which fails, and could be better represented thus:



In contrast to both, this is intended as a relaxed and informal ramble, pursuing its path in, ideally, the following manner:



Finally, a literary thought: I have just finished reading the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Richard Ford, *Independence Day*, which is rather good. The central character is what we would call an "estate agent". This is, when one thinks about it, an hilariously overblown description for terraced-house salesmen, an early version of the employment euphemism which describes, for example, toilet cleaners as sanitary executives. But the American word for estate agent is "realtor", which is even odder. I recall the confusion when I first visited the US and saw all those impressive gilt Realtor signs... and the sense of disappointment on realising that this wasn't, however, a country with an epidemiologist on every corner.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

I get quite lonely by myself and I start buying cats – Peter Stringfellow, nightclub owner
Women are programmed to love completely, and men are programmed to spread it around. We are fools to think it's any different – Beryl Bainbridge, authoress

Ask those people who say "Don't rock the boat" whether they would work for 14.20 an hour – Rodney Bickerstaffe, Unison general secretary
Being recognised as a celebrity has always made me feel uncomfortable. It was a media event to go out and buy a bloody newspaper – Martin Shaw, actor

If you stick your face on television, you can hardly blame people for wanting to come up and poke you to make sure it's you – Victoria Wood, comedian

I had girl friends from the day when I first discovered what you could do in the back row of a cinema – Lord Runcie, former Archbishop of Canterbury, quoted in Humphrey Carpenter's biography
I know everybody in this industry fights shy in the face of maturity. But it doesn't kill you to accept that time has passed – Billy Bragg, pop singer and political activist
In Moscow we have very few humorous things – Andrei Belyaev, sculptor, who has produced a monument to a learner driver, a figure of a man with a head shaped like a teapot. Russian slang for a novice driver is 'chainik' or teapot

the saturday story



Since the War we have seen an explosion of popular culture, as epitomised by the Beatles and their fans. But has it really been the century of the common man, asks Godfrey Hodgson

Making the People's Century

Tonight on BBC1 and tomorrow on BBC2 the second series of *People's Century* begins. Ten films went out last autumn and another series of eight begins next week.

This is the biggest, the most ambitious and the most expensive factual series the BBC has ever attempted. There are some important questions to be asked about the broadcasting policy involved, and also about the way history is best treated on television. But it is even more important to ask: Was it really the People's Century?

Did the 20th century, unlike Winston Churchill's pudding, have a theme? ("Waifer", the great man growled, "take away this pudding, it has no theme!")

Recently the historian Eric Hobsbawm came up with an interesting way of looking at the century. There was, he suggested, a "short 20th century" within the calendar century, and it lasted not 100 years, but 75, from the outbreak of world war in 1914 to the collapse of Communism in 1989.

It is true that the short 20th century has a story, a plot. For all the unimaginable vastness of

its events, its swirl of surprises and unintended consequences, it did move on from cause to consequence.

In 1914 the world was ruled by half a dozen imperial states: the British, German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, and the imperial republics of France and the US. Under the strain of world war, the empires were shaken. Three of them, the German, Austrian and Turkish, collapsed. One, the empire of the Romanovs, exploded in revolution.

The world economy, unable

to recover from the war, sank into Depression. As a reaction to revolution and recession, fascism rose and caused a second world war. That in turn left two systems on: led by communist Russia, the other by the US, locked in the Cold War. Only

when that conflict ended with the collapse of communism was the short 20th century over.

Attention has understandably focused on that titanic morality play. But it is worth looking for a moment at the two tag ends of the 20th century, the dozen years before the guns of August 1914, and the dozen years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The world has been transformed beyond recognition over the intervening three-quarters of a century. Ancient structures of class supremacy have been swept away. The non-white peoples of the world have demanded equality. Women have transformed their situation, and further changes are under way. Technology has changed, from horse and buggy to car and truck, from howitzer to cruise missile, from typewriter to computer, all with consequences for the structures of society.

Still, there are uncanny resemblances between then and now. The century is ending, as it began, in optimism or, if you like, in naive faith about the power of technology to create wealth and bring prosperity to all in a global economic system.

In Britain we look back to the decade before the first war as to an idyll of peace and prosperity, a time of Panama hats and cucumber sandwiches under the cedar on the lawn. It was not like that. That was the decade of the "strange death of liberal England", of violent conflict over women's suffrage, Ireland, poverty and the constitution. Much that is familiar there

isated by the well-tailored and the well-armed. Suppressed nationalism even chose the same spot to remind people what it could do. The bridge in Sarajevo where Gavrilo Princip shot the Archduke Ferdinand in 1914 is barely a hundred yards from the market place where a shell exploded, killing 50 people, in Sarajevo in 1995. Has it been, in fact, a People's Century? Or was it stolen

the history of the 20th century appeal to the biggest possible audience.

Pagenauma's response was to make it a history as seen not top down by the leaders and the powerful but from the bottom up by "ordinary people".

Ordinary in inverted commas, of course, because many of the 1,000-odd interviewees are anything but ordinary. They included people who had done

the method had to be rigorous, and the work it implied was truly daunting. These were not random "vox pop" interviews. Researchers would find archive film of, say, an American and a Russian soldier embracing when the armies linked up in 1945 on the Elbe. They then tracked down and interviewed the men.

The technique produced golden moments. Some are happy, like the story of Gail Halverson, now a Mormon bishop. During the 1947 Berlin airlift, he floated chocolates down for the children on little parachutes. Mercedes Wild was the little crippled girl who wrote to him saying she ran too slow to get to the chocolates. Halverson sent her a box. It was the first chocolate she had ever eaten.

There are moments of

almost unbearable poignancy, as when Sumiko Morikawa describes how she tried to keep her three babies alive during the great Tokyo fire raid, but they all died. There are great one-liners, like the American scientist Sherwood Roland's reply to his wife. He came home one night from the lab where he was working on the

effect of CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) on the ozone layer. She asked him how his day had been, and he answered, "The research is going fine, but it looks like the end of the world."

The series has been a huge success. So far it has been sold to 17 countries, which will recoup some of the £10m or more the BBC has spent in what was a joint venture with WGBH, the Boston public television station. WGBH made eight, the BBC 18 of the 26 one-hour films. Audiences have averaged between 5.5 and 6 million, about the same as for the *Nine O'Clock News*.

There have been whispers that BBC management was nevertheless disappointed with that audience. But at a seminar this week, Alan Yentob, director of programming for BBC television, emphasised that the BBC was committed to major historical projects. A number are already in the early stages of production.

There have been criticisms. Some have complained about the cost. (Much of it will come back.) Some wonder how you could come out with the history of a century five years before it ended. (You had to, to beat the competition.) Film purists were troubled by laying effects of battle, crowds and so on over silent archive film. (Christine Whitaker, who was in charge of the amazing archive film research, says flatly that people won't watch long expanses of silent film.)

What of the underlying thesis, that this was the people's century? It was certainly the first century in which ordinary people from more than 30 countries could communicate what they felt as they do in the series. It was the century when the world's peoples got up out of the auditorium and joined Western Europe and North America on the stage. But was a people's century in the sense of a democratic century? It was an age of Big Government, Big Business, Big Labour, Big Science and Big War.

Now, at the century's end, there are hopes that democracy will spread. But after watching this series, many viewers will want to ask: Is the century ending as it began, in false hope? Will there be a short 21st century, too? Even ... a very short 21st century? At the very least, it's an idea for another television series.

The writer is the author of the two-volume book of the series, "People's Century", of which volume two is published this week.

You can't always look the other way

NEVERWHERE

neil gaiman

A new 6 part fantasy drama at 9.00pm on Thursdays. BBC2 from September 12th

LOOK AGAIN... Catch the video, book, CD & cassette from October 14th, after episode 4



BBC

jo brand's week

There's me thinking that Boris Heart-Attack is just about to croak and is taking it a bit easy when I read in the paper he's been out shooting ducks and wild boar near his clinic. He managed to down 40 ducks, apparently, and shared his kill at dinner with Helmut Kohl. Not a diet for a cardiac patient I am sure many doctors would recommend. Help is at hand for Boris, though, in the shape of a woman called Zinaida Bolyeva, who has offered her heart, not in the romantic sense, but in the rip-it-out-of-her-and-bung-it-into-him sense. What a strange offer. Maybe Zinaida thinks she can exist without a heart. One can't blame her, I suppose. I was surprised to find out Boris actually had one.

I admire the way in which some soap

operas tackle social issues in an attempt to educate people that probably wouldn't watch documentaries about subjects such as Aids or breast cancer on Channel Four. Recently in *Eastenders* someone blew the gaff on Mark Fowler, who is HIV positive.

Through a moving speech by the sufferer himself and snippets of information, the programme attempted to get

the message across that the HIV virus

can only be transmitted in a limited

number of ways. Even this approach

does not seem to be working for a

group of parents from Grantham,

who have asked teachers to ban a

five-year-old boy from the school

because he may have contracted the

virus. Maybe they just can't avoid imitating the behaviour of Grantham's

most famous daughter, Mrs Thatcher herself.

It seems that the two women who

were elected to the Northern Ireland

Forum have been encountering more

than their fair share of abuse in their

attempts to bridge the gap between

the unionist and nationalist sides.

They have been called "silly women,"



Boris, ducking his responsibility?

I admit to "shut up" and been physically pushed around too. Oh, the sophistication and adult behaviour of politicians. How on earth are this mob going to come to any agreement about territory if they can't even display a minimum amount of respect towards women?

I was dutifully touring a small

museum in a village in Shropshire this

week, when I heard a tremendously

loud wailing noise outside, the sort of

noise that in London would have

made most people head double quick

for the other side of the road. Seeing

the look of slight alarm on my face,

the attendant of the museum smiled

at me and said, "It's alright, it's an old

man who lives in the village who's

deaf. We all know him well."

I looked out of the door to see a man who

must have been 80 waving a stick and

shouting at the top of his voice.

Everyone seemed to be acquainted

with him and was passing by, nodding

their hellos and smiling. Now that's

what I call Care In The Community.

We all know that beaches tend to be

littered with personal items that we



would rather not gaze upon as we are

about to dive into the briny, but in

Scotland slightly more worrying sub-

stances are being discharged into the

sea, which is having a very strange

effect on the local fish population.

Chemicals in this sewage are concen-

trated enough to change men fish into

women fish, thus resulting in what are

apparently called "feminised fish". I

wonder how long it will be before I

crawl out of the sea looking like

Bernard Manning? A very long time,

hopefully, as swimming in the sea is

very low down my list of priorities.

Still, if we have feminised fish, it may

not be long before we have feminist

ones. Watch out for your dangly bits,

all you bathers in swimming trunks.

I had tea with a nun this week, a strange encounter, you might think, for me, it was immensely enjoyable and instructive, although I'm afraid my questions were not of the highest theological order. At one point I rather foolishly asked whether the nuns all watch telly or not, even though of course I was preparing a very complex question in my head. I was informed that only two programmes were viewed with any great regularity, the first being the News and the second – wait for it – *Dad's Army*. How delightful. Perhaps I might try and get in after all.

It seems to be unavoidable that some individuals with a sadistic streak end up in the caring professions where they can exercise their nasty little impulses on vulnerable individuals. What normally seems to happen is that a bullying, exclusive regime develops amongst long-term staff and new staff coming in are kept quiet by bullying or stone-walling. This may or may not be what happened at a hospital in Glasgow, where investigations are under way after elderly patients complained of being treated in a variety of vicious ways including being tormented because they were Jewish or having their property stolen. This situation tends to develop when carers become as institutionalised as their charges, and is only rectified when someone has the courage to speak out. Perhaps it is time there was a complete re-examination of the effect on long-term staff in stressful, "caring" jobs. Sometimes the depressing and seemingly never-ending grind of caring for the elderly or those with learning difficulties brings out the worst in certain people. Still, considering the way in which whistle-blowers have been treated in the past, it's no wonder many keep their mouths shut.



Is this the future for Jo?

هذا من الأصل

Cheeky Charlie

His hotels are 'sensitive' and hugely expensive; ours are 'eyesores'



david aaronovitch

How considerate of Prince Charles to wait for all us to return from our ecologically unsustainable holidays before laying into them. "Increased tourism has brought destruction to unspoiled parts of our world," he wrote this week, castigating "bad-mannered development" and "featureless dormitory blocks" such as those found on the edge of Hyde Park, along the coast of the Med and lining the "river embankments of our finest East European cities" (whoever "us" is).

HRH is not against tourism per se. It's just that he wants it to be sensitive to "local culture and traditions, to preserve a sense of place and to minimise disturbance to the environment". He goes on: "Remarkable results can be achieved from converting existing buildings - redundant mills, old hospitals, abandoned military buildings or monasteries". But not, for some reason, under-used palaces.

There is, of course, nothing new about this call. "Green tourism" has been in vogue for a decade, and there have even been demolitions of high-rise blocks on the Majorcan coast as a response to the growing tourist aversion to being stacked along polluted beaches with nothing but lager to drink.

Authentic experience holidays are all the rage, and many resorts now boast of their strict planning laws and low-rise developments.

But as we branch out, leaving the Costas and heading for the unspoilt natural beauty of the Seychelles or Nepal or Costa Rica, we demand new hotels (if nicer, less ugly ones) in the new destinations. Airport runways are extended, hire-car facilities mushroom and - most important of all - the benighted locals incorporate tourism into their local economies, not realising the damage they are doing to their own colourful (if impoverished) cultures.

Unexceptional stuff then, this little Jeremiad from the soothsaying Prince. So why is it that when I heard a radio report of his article in "Green Hotelier" (green as in ecological, not as in naive and silly), I ground my teeth and tore my hair in exasperated rage?

It's because I think that the Prince, well-intentioned as he might see himself, is not really against travel and sightseeing as such - he's just against everybody else travelling and sightseeing. He has realised (if only sub-consciously) that when many start to do the things that once only the élites could do, then these things become transformed, become ugly. A deserted beach is beautiful - bring your hamper and dine out. A beach full of fat men, skinny women and yelling children - and two cafes to feed them - is a blot on the landscape.

Consider the vacationing of the Royal Family themselves. Last January, Charles himself flew with royal nanny and the kids in a half-full BAe 126 of the Queen's Flight to Zurich and drove from there to Klosters for a skiing holiday. There, they stayed in the Walserhof Hotel (commonly described as five-star, rather than as "revolutionary solar-heated, low water usage, sewage recycling"). And we know that skiing is causing massive erosion on Alpine slopes. Meanwhile, his estranged wife was in Barbuda, where the local economy is presumably immune from royal

expenditure, steadfastly refusing to jet in luxuries and sell them on at exorbitant rates.

And where was Charles when his divorce went through? In Brunei, as a birthday guest (one of 20,000) of the Sultan of Brunei, who opened a new and vast theme park for his grateful subjects during the prince's visit.

How did these rides, one wonders, "preserve a sense of place"? In addition, the Prince, we're told, took the opportunity to take a helicopter ride to visit a rainforest nature reserve. And how exactly are helicopters - using hundreds of pounds of fuel an hour - part of the local traditions? The literature of the tribes of Borneo is not full of stories of head-hunters traveling from longhouse to longhouse in choppers to the strains of the *Ride of the Valkyrie*.

But helicopters and planes are a big bit of the royal thing. The Royal Flight has 11 jets and six whirlybirds and Charles uses them to travel between his hols in Balmoral and Middlesex. Now just imagine what would happen if most of the hundreds of thousands of people who took their holidays in Scotland were to travel by helicopter (or if they demanded a large wing of a palace each once they got there)? How long would we have to wait before a princely denunciation of the mass despoliation of the skies of Britain, or the immutability of such a resource-intensive method of transport?

And while we're about it, where was the public exorcism of his brother (and the erstwhile HRH, the Duchess of York) for the appalling "South York" ranch-house with which they disgraced a substantial tract of the Home Counties?

It is the same with the Prince and cars. He has rightly lamented the impact of cars upon the environment, lauded public transport and urged the bicycle upon his subjects-to-be. "The need for change is urgent," he wrote. Yet where is the royal Raleigh? The princely safety helmet? The diamond-studded cycle clips? Why does he run five motors, all large, including an Aston Martin that gives 15 miles to the gallon? Is it because it isn't his own car that he sees as a problem (there are, after all, very few princes of Wales), but ours, because there are millions upon millions of us? Presumably, skiing is okay providing few do it (including him), huge cars are kosher providing few use them (including him), waste on a lavish scale is tolerable providing that only a minority indulge (including him), wide-open spaces are lonely and unspoilt if nobody visits them (except him). His hotels are "sensitive" and

so are his cars.

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expenditure. Ours are "eyesores" and all we can afford.

Unfortunately for His Royal Highness, this *de haut en bas* proselytising will not wash. There is a growing belief, particularly among younger campaigners, in the need for us all to take personal responsibility - the need for people to act in a particular way rather than just talking about it. Why on earth should we listen to his lamentations about environmental degradation when it seems to be code for "keep outta my face"? Firstly, Charles, sell the Aston Martin, then flop the chopper, kick Klosters and, finally, cycle to work. When we, the plebs, see you acting godly, we just might take a bit more notice of the sermons.

It is a great pity Professor Wragg felt unable to accept his invitation to take part in Thursday's *Observer* debate on my

Sex on the Hill: the US scandal that still pays off

by Rupert Cornwell



The rise of the consultants is a commentary on the state of American politics. Sin only adds to their allure, and to the advances from their publishers

according to the diary kept by his paramour, Sherry Rowlands. His disgrace, we scribblers opined, could not but tar his boss, a man himself not unacquainted with tabloid scandal.

How wrong we were. For one thing, Americans have long since factored "character" into their views of Bill Clinton. Contrary to the conventional wisdom of insider Washington, the Morris affair left the public cold. If anything, a touch of

sympathy was apparent for his boss. This time, a courtier was not a king's sinister accomplice, but his betrayer. When Mr Morris's covetings in the Jefferson Hotel made headlines, the President's lead over Mr Dole was about 10 points. Today, it is double that.

And the Morris fortunes have equally flourished. The "scandal" about him may grow, with allegations that he has a child fathered in an out-of-

wedlock liaison and accusations that he breached confidentiality agreements by rushing into print with his memoirs. Mr Clinton's staff trembles at what it may contain, their fears not stilled by the author's insistence that the book will be "dignified, accurate, insightful, probing and, I hope, newsworthy." Anyone who had worked closely with a President should "share their experiences with the public", Mr Morris contin-

ues archly - omitting reference to the \$2.5 million advance he has received from Random House.

Meanwhile, the man who gave no interviews is popping up all over the place - including the halls of the once-venerable *New Yorker* magazine, to whose editors, staffers, and advertisers Mr Morris vouchsafed an off-the-record breakfast briefing on Thursday. He was described by some present

as "cheerful, confident and not terribly contrite".

But contrition is not an attribute much associated with political consultants. Take Roger Stone, a Republican who claims much influence with the Dole campaign, and the latest "key strategist" to provide grist for the scandal mill (let no one say slime is not a bipartisan affair). Having wrapped up its Morris series, the *Star* claims in its new edition that Mr Stone and his wife have placed steamy photos of themselves and ads for group sex in swingers' magazine and on the Internet.

Mr Stone holds up his hands in studied outrage, at the work of some "sick, disgruntled person" out to smear him, while Mr Dole, desperate to preserve at least his "character" edge over the President, has swiftly and completely severed his links - whatever they were in the first place - with Mr Stone. That, however, is where the damage is likely to end. Like Dick Morris, Roger Stone, a body-building fanatic who has spent \$8,000 (£5,000) on hair transplants, revels in infamy. Back in 1985, the *New Republic* ran a profile on him entitled "State-Of-The-Art Sleazeball," and its delighted subject sent copies to all his friends. Now he's on the Internet. Can a book contract be far behind? More pertinently, should anyone be surprised?

The rise of the consultants is a commentary on the current state of American politics. The genuine differences between the candidates are minimal. In this 1996 campaign thus far, serious issues have gone virtually undiscussed, drowned by banalities about family values. Presidential nominating conventions, once so gripping, have turned into a minutely worked collage of chat-show sob stories, ranging from Christopher Reeve to wounded policemen, HIV-infected children and Al Gore's telling of how he sat at his sister's bedside, watching her die of lung cancer. Far more than in Britain, the substance of politics in America has devolved into manipulation and image-marketing. Issues have been replaced by process, the province less of the politicians than of the consultants who sell them.

Small wonder then that some have become more famous than the politicians they work for. Sin only adds to their allure, and to the advances from their publishers. The Morris volume will doubtless be a rattling good read. But for the content of American politics, one may tremble.

Not just an educated guess

It was entirely predictable that Professor Ted Wragg, who has been defending the indefensible in education for as long as anyone can remember, should have reacted like a scalded cat to my book, *All Must Have Prizes*. What is particularly notable, however, is the dishonesty with which he has done so.

He refuses to engage with my fundamental arguments. Instead, he alleges that I selectively cooked the evidence to create a false impression of educational failure. Any reader of the book can see that his claim that I relied on a few "right-wingers" for information is grossly untrue (although, unlike Wragg, I am not frightened of people who don't sport the "correct" political badge).

I reached my conclusions about education mainly from what many very concerned teachers were either telling me or writing: classroom teachers, trainee teachers, university professors, A-level examiners and educational psychologists, not to mention parents and pupils themselves. I also drew upon numerous dire but mainstream educational texts that both reflect and lay down the principles of current education orthodoxy. The unpalatable fact for Wragg is that so much of what is written in educational texts is demonstrable rubbish. It cannot be defended, which is why he chooses instead to cast doubt on the very existence of such evidence.

Wragg claims that no teachers are moral relativists. He ignores the evidence I provide of teachers who have either told me or written that children should no longer be taught "the right answer" and that wrong answers are not to be corrected because such errors are evidence of creativity. He ignores my documented evidence from educationists and their texts of an explicit retreat from the rules, accuracy and exactness. He ignores my evidence from named university maths and language teachers of a catastrophic collapse of knowledge among undergraduates with A and B grade A-levels.

It is a great pity Professor Wragg felt unable to accept his invitation to take part in Thursday's *Observer* debate on my



What the papers said
Colin MacCabe,
New Statesman

It says something about the collapse of any hierarchy of authority in knowledge that this farago of ignorance and inaccuracy can appear under the imprint of a reputable publisher'

Professor Ted Wragg,
The Independent

Take a few prejudices. Lace them liberally with anecdotes ... add some quotes from like-minded mates ... filter out as many facts as possible ...

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obituaries / gazette

General Ernesto Geisel

General Ernesto Geisel was the military ruler who showed courage and common sense in putting Brazil back on the path to civilian rule during his term as President - from 1974 to 1979 - in a period of significant political and economic development in Latin America's largest country. He was the fourth in a line of five generals who ruled for 21 years from 1964 to 1985. Geisel had been a conspirator in the 1964 coup, backed by the United States, which overthrew President João Goulart at a time of increasing government instability and corruption.

Military rule brought a ban on political and trade-union activity. Urban guerrilla groups were eliminated, and many people were imprisoned and tortured. To his credit, President Geisel detected the need for change and began the slow, gradual process of returning his country to civilian rule, despite hard-line opposition from sections of the armed forces. He acted decisively in response to the notorious torture and killing of the journalist Vladimir Herzog, and a worker named Manuel Fiel Filho, sacking the São Paulo commander held responsible, and also, later, the army minister, General Sylvio

Frota, for undermining his efforts to steer Brazil back to civilian rule.

It was not an easy road. Geisel kept firm control of power as pressure grew from politicians and once-dormant student and labour movements to strengthen the legislative and judicial branches of government. He briefly suspended Congress in 1977 and introduced measures aimed at weakening Congress and guaranteeing future electoral victories for the government-controlled Army party.

Geisel presided over a burgeoning economy and manufacturing industry, boosted by a policy of encouraging an unprecedented degree of foreign investment while keeping state control over major industries. Brazil's cities expanded rapidly, and São Paulo became South America's biggest city.

Towards the end of Geisel's tenure, the so-called economic miracle was beginning to fade. Fast growth complicated Brazil's enormous problems, burdening it with the world's largest foreign debt. Geisel was able to do little to lessen the plight of homeless child workers and beggars, and the swelling ranks of the poor in drought-ridden states in the

north-east or concentrated in vast city slum settlements called *favelas*. Rich mineral deposits and an expanding agricultural industry aggravated clashes with peasants and indigenous Indians driven out by gun-slingers brought in by developers. Geisel's presidency coincided with continuing destruction of vast areas of virgin rain forest in Amazonia, gouged out by roads and agricultural intrusion.

Brazil's failure to find home-produced oil, unlike nearly all its neighbours, was exacerbated by the 1973 world oil crisis, exposing its vulnerability and dependence on imported oil from the Middle East and Nigeria. In response it built up its agricultural and manufactured exports, especially of military equipment such as tracked armoured vehicles and aircraft, becoming one of the world's biggest arms exporters to Arab countries and elsewhere.

Lack of oil encouraged Brazil to develop alternative sources of energy, embarking upon a huge nuclear-energy industry and some of the world's biggest hydroelectric schemes on its massive river systems - the Amazon and the Paraná. Geisel had built up considerable expertise as an oil refinery su-

perintendent, a member of the Petroleum Council, and as head of Brazil's state-owned oil monopoly, Petrobras. He introduced the innovative "proto-col" programme to produce alcohol from cane sugar, to propel cars, making Brazil a world leader in this new technology and mass producer of the alcohol engine which drives more than a million of Brazilian-built cars. Brazil has since discovered offshore oil and Petrobras has become a world expert in deep-sea oil extraction.

Geisel was born in Bento Gonçalves in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. He attended army staff colleges in Brazil and the United States and held a variety of military and industrial posts, including Secretary-General for National Security and Secretary of Public Works. As President, Geisel came on a state visit to the United Kingdom, in return for a highly successful state visit by the Queen to Brazil.

Harold Briley

Ernesto Geisel, army officer, businessman and politician; born Bento Gonçalves, Brazil 3 August 1907; President of Brazil 1974-79; married (one daughter); died Rio de Janeiro 10 September 1996.



Geisel, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, inspects a guard of honour on his state visit to Britain, 1976

Photograph: Central Press



Tudor: absurdist

Photograph: Betty Freeman / Lebrecht Collection

It will be hard for anyone who is used to watching the Merce Cunningham Dance Company to imagine it without the musician David Tudor. Though he had a career before and apart from the formation of the Cunningham company, he was not only, in 1953, one of the founding fathers of this, one of the most absorbingly radical artistic endeavours of the century, he was one of its leading practitioners right up to 1994. Ill-health obliged him to retire late in that year.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1926, he began his career as an organist. Before long, however, he became a pianist, and became known as one of America's foremost performers of the contemporary repertoire. He gave the first performances of works by Karlheinz Stockhausen, who dedicated a piece to him, and many others; and he gave the American premieres of Pierre Boulez's second piano sonata in 1950. In particular, he developed a close association with John Cage, who said that all his

works before 1970 were written either directly for Tudor or with him in mind.

During the 10 years that followed the Second World War, there was no more important crucible for radical artistic experiment in the United States than the summer schools at Black Mountain College, in North Carolina. Josef Albers, Buckminster Fuller, Willem and Elaine de Kooning, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg and Remy Charlip were among the artists that went there during those years (though not all of them went every year). It was there that the aesthetics and procedures of Cunningham/Cage dance theatre were formed in the early 1950s, in which live dance and live music co-exist without one making any specific response to the other; and Tudor was present.

In his 1961 book *Silence*, Cage tells this story:

One day down at Black Mountain College David Tudor was eating his lunch. A student came over to his table and began asking him questions.

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One day down at Black Mountain College David Tudor was eating his lunch. A student came over to his table and began asking him questions.

David Tudor went on eating his lunch. The student went on asking him questions. Finally David Tudor looked at him and said, "If you don't know, why do you ask?"

In 1952, while working there as an instructor, Tudor took part in a famous theatre piece by John Cage, untitled and unstructured, with such other performers as Cunningham, Rauschenberg, and the poets Mary Caroline Richards and Charles Olson; and, in 1953, while Cunningham was still sometimes responding to the structure of a piece of music, Tudor served as his accompanist during the creation of *Untitled Solo* that year, made to a piece of piano music by Christian Wolff so complex that Tudor once remarked: "Well, this is clearly impossible, but we're going right ahead and do it anyway."

In the same year, he made a selection of the 19th-century sonata music he loved to be the accompaniment for *Dime a Dance*, an extraordinary Cunningham work in which the order of the evening's dance

material was determined by the drawing of cards from a pack by members of the audience.

In the 1960s, when taped music started to become a regular accompaniment to other live dance, Tudor and Cage insisted on keeping music "live". Increasingly they used electronic music, and musical material they used might include taped material, but the live role of the musician was crucial. The music for a Cunningham performance might change from one performance to the next than the dancing. And, in the late 1960s, Tudor ended his career as a pianist, and, using electronic keyboards that he himself kept developing, became a regular composer for Cunningham.

He started on a high with the music for *RainForest*, a work memorable for the loose silver helium pillows that Andy Warhol placed around the dancers, and he was the composer for many of Cunningham's most important and striking dance creations. The

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In the deep grindings he produced for Cunningham's 1982 *Quare*, he was an abstract expressionist of sound, setting a painful, even tragic, aura about an extraordinary dance drama that Cunningham himself left highly ambivalent in tone.

When Cage died in 1992, Tudor remained one of the embodiments of his artistic philosophy. In 1994, Tudor contributed the electronic component - *Scandings: Ocean Diary* - to the music which also included 112 orchestral players) for *Ocean*, the last project Cage and Cunningham had begun to conceive. *Ocean* had its premiere in Brussels, the highlight of that city's first Kunsten

Festival des Arts. This July, it had its American premiere in New York at the Lincoln Center Festival.

Like Cage, Tudor never lost his nerve. The premiere performances of Cunningham's *Enescu* took place at the Paris Opéra, two months after Cage's death, and the often loud score that Tudor composed included sounds like whole collectives of duck, geese and other birds, a sometimes absurd contrast to the beautifully human goings-on stage. As Cunningham and his dancers alternated with the musicians in taking their bows, the Opera audience pointedly cheered the former and booed the latter. Equally pointedly, Cunningham gestured in congratulations to Tudor and the other musicians. And Tudor's music grew more markedly uncomfortable and absurdist at each performance.

Alastair Macaulay

David Tudor, pianist and composer; born Philadelphia 20 January 1926; died 13 August 1996.

Professor Hans List

Professor Dr Dr h.c.mult. Hans List, founder of the Austrian automotive engineering company AVL, was 100 when he died on Tuesday, and came into work until the day before he died. The lifelong energy and ability of this remarkable engineer is underlined by his elaborate title. The appellation "Dr Dr h.c.mult." shortens the Latin *honoris causa multudo* - roughly "many honorary doctorates" - the first for his original Doctorate of Technical Science at Graz, the second for four other university honours.

These awards exclude a string of national and interna-

tional honours reflecting a wide-ranging academic career which occupied most of the first half of his working life. Then, when 50 years old, List started a private engineering consultancy which four years later in 1952 became the company "Anstalt für Verbrennungskraftmaschinen, Prof Hans List". List Internal Combustion Engine Institute - AVL GmbH, as it is known internationally.

In 1926 he took up the post of professor and head of the Department of Thermodynamics at the state university of Tongji, Woosung, in China. In spite of modest equipment and the distractions of the Sino-Japanese

war, List was responsible for extensive basic research work, especially on the scavenging (clean exhausting) of two-stroke

engines.

Nineteen thirty-two was

back in Graz, succeeding Professor Magg as head of Thermodynamics and Internal Combustion Engines. Here, whilst continuing engine research, he began his internationally renowned reference book *The Internal Combustion Engine* (1935). As well as editing the work of contributors, four volumes of this valued tome were written by List himself.

In 1941 List moved to Dres-

den University as successor to Dr Naegel. The end of the Second World War brought an invitation to take a professorship at Aachen Technical University, but List chose to return to Graz to concentrate on writing and publishing further editions of his book. So it was that at 50, when lesser people may be considering steady and consolidating, List branched out into his second life, as the leading consultant in diesel-engine combustion.

The company which sprang from List's first office grew steadily, today employing 1,300 engineers in Graz, and more in

offices abroad. He was particularly interested in two-stroke diesels, although none became truly commercially successful.

List's - and AVL's - really successful work was in the development of the direct injection diesel, particularly in overcoming the tremendous challenge of making small - car-size - direct injection diesel engines.

Where Sir Harry Ricardo in Britain developed indirect injection - still the most popular form of car-size diesel - List and AVL ended up doing a comparable job for the more fuel-efficient small direct injection diesel, which is now steadily

supplanting indirect injection in cars.

The line-up of companies who AVL have helped design and develop their direct injection (d.i.) diesels includes Ford (with one of the first d.i. diesels for the *Transit* van), Land Rover, and Rover with their superb L-series d.i. diesel; while other leaders in the field such as the Audi-Volkswagen Group use what are effectively clones of AVL combustion chambers.

Michael Scarlett

Hans List, automotive engineer; born Graz, Austria 30 April 1896; twice married; died Graz 10 September 1996.

Diesel engines: List at 100

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

WAHL: Professor Anthony Nicholae, died in London on Friday 13 September. Funeral arrangements to be announced.

Anouncement for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the General Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £5.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, forthcoming meetings, Marriages, Deaths) must be submitted in writing to the General Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £10.50 a line (VAT extra). They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 0171-293 2000.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

TODAY: The Duke of Kent, Honorary Air Commodore, attends the Air Home Day of RAF Leuchars, St Andrews, Fife, Tayside.

TONIGHT: The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, opens the Braemar Mountaineering Association, Braemar, Aberdeenshire.

The Prince of Wales attends the Annual Baubie Britain Service of Thanksgiving and Rededication in Westminster Abbey, London SW1.

Changing of the Guard

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Royal Yeomanry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Royal Yeomanry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; Guards

Birthdays

TODAY: Mr Paul Allott, cricketer, 40; Miss Amanda Barrie, actress, 57; Miss Sandra Blow, painter, 71; Mr James Clappison MP, 40; Lord Clevedon of Penfins, former Labour minister, 92; Professor John Coates, electrical engineer, 89; Sir James Cobain, former Headmaster of Abingdon School, 62; Vice-Admiral Sir William Crawford, 89; Lord Dean of Harptree, former MP, 72; Mr Terence Donovan, photographer, 60; Mr Morton Harket, pop singer, 37; Mr Martin Hill, tenor, 52; Mr Michael Howard, organ recitalist and conductor, 74; The Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy, husband of Princess Alexandra, 68; Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey, 74; Mr Kepier Wessels, cricketer, 39; Mr Ray Williamson, footballer, 40; Mr Nic Wilson, radio newsreader and presenter, 65.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Birth: Johann Michael Haydn, composer, 1737; Jack Hulbert (John Edward Hawkins), actor, 1910. Deaths: Dante (Durante) Alighieri, poet, 1321; Arthur Wellesley, first Duke of Wellington, soldier and statesman, 1852; Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, architect, 1852; Isadora Duncan, dancer, 1927; Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, first president of Czechoslovakia, 1937; Princess Grace (Grace Kelly) of Monaco, after a car crash 1982. On this day: the Gregorian calendar was adopted in Britain, when 3 September became 14 September, 1752. Napoleon and his army entered Moscow, 1812. The first steamship to cross the Atlantic, the *Teutonic*, was built 1857. The *Land* 1959. Today is also the beginning of the Jewish New Year, AM 5757.

TOMORROW: Birth: Prince Trajan, Roman emperor, 53; Thos Oates, informer and fabricator of the "Popish Plot", 1649; Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie, detective-story writer, 1890; Jean Renoir, film director, 1894. Deaths: Sir Thomas Overbury, poet, poisoned in the Tower of London, 1613; William Huskisson, statesman, run down by the locomotive *Rocket*, 1829; Isambard Kingdom Brunel, engineer, 1859; John Hanning Speke, explorer, shot by accident 1864; William Seewright Burroughs, adding machine pioneer, 1898; Willy Messerschmitt, aircraft designer, 1978. On this day: tanks were first

Lectures

TODAY: National Portrait Gallery: Professor David Karlin, "The Brownings' Marriage: contemporary representations", 3pm.

Dinners

Association of Anaesthetists The Annual Meeting of the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland was held yesterday evening at the Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth, after the Annual Scientific Meeting held jointly with the German Society of Anaesthetists and Intensive Care Medicine. Dr W.L.M. Baird, President, and Mrs Baird, welcomed the guests. Among those present were Dr S. McNeil Lyons, Professor Dr M. G. Bremner, Professor Dr R. A. Ackroyd, Professor G. H. Hempleman-Edwards, Dr M. Powers, Professor and Mrs M.D. Vickers, Professor A. J. Cooper, Professor and Mrs J. A. Reid, Dr J. M. Doherty, Dr J. J. Rose, Dr J. M. J. Zorab, Dr and Mrs W. Wright, Sir Keith and Lady Spikes.

Tom Wakefield

A memorial service to celebrate the life and work of Tom Wakefield will be held on Tuesday 24 September at 3pm, St James's Church, Piccadilly, London W1, and afterwards at the church.

A priest I know was recently involved in an extremely sticky meeting. Like many country living, his is

Foreign Exchange Rates									
STERLING		DOLLAR		D-MARK					
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	1 month	3 months				
US	15500	53	63	1000	6500				
Canada	12350	13.3	15.3	50.37	52.1				
Germany	23250	1.3	1.3	15.22	15.26				
France	20260	1.28-1.34	1.28-1.34	5.925	5.925				
Italy	20265	4.3	4.25	4.451	4.353				
Japan	17100	125-127	125-127	7.45	7.225				
UK	12210	4.25-4.3	4.25-4.3	45-47	45-47				
Australia	12210	1.3	1.3	51.28	51.47				
Denmark	90260	155-175	155-175	55.95	55.95				
Netherlands	20350	1.3	1.3	4.35	4.35				
Ireland	10205	1.2	1.2	1.27	1.27				
Norway	10205	2.1-2.1	2.1-2.1	4.22	4.22				
Sweden	10205	1.2	1.2	3.734	3.734				
Switzerland	12210	1.3	1.3	15.21	15.21				
Portugal	12210	1.2	1.2	1.25	1.25				
Spain	12210	1.2	1.2	1.25	1.25				
Greece	12210	1.2	1.2	1.25	1.25				
Hong Kong	12210	2.1	2.1	15.24	15.24				
New Zealand	12210	1.3	1.3	30.32	30.32				
Singapore	12210	1.3	1.3	0.92	0.92				
Saudi Arabia	12210	0.4	0.4	3.755	3.755				
Singapore	12210	0.4	0.4	4.30	4.30				

Note: Forward rates quoted high to low are 10 days out from spot rate; those quoted low to high are at a premium (short) or discount (long) from spot rate. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0897 722 2020. Calls cost 25p per minute (cheapest rate 45p other times).

Tourist Rates									
Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar				
c. Italy	18860	22500	c. Spain	18300	20500				
Austria (Salzburg)	158000	180000	France (Paris)	18200	20000				
Bulgaria (Sofia)	158000	180000	Germany (Berlin)	184000	204000				
Canada (Ottawa)	120000	130000	Greece (Athens)	172000	192000				
Egypt	32000	34000	Portugal (Lisbon)	18000	19000				
Iceland	21000	21500	Spain (Barcelona)	18000	19000				
Switzerland	12210	12500	Sweden (Stockholm)	18000	19000				
UK (London)	12210	12500	Switzerland (Zurich)	18000	19000				
USA (New York)	12210	12500	Turkey (Istanbul)	18000	19000				
USSR (Moscow)	12210	12500	United States (Dollar)	12000	13000				

Note: Forward rates quoted high to low are 10 days out from spot rate; those quoted low to high are at a premium (short) or discount (long) from spot rate. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0897 722 2020. Calls cost 25p per minute (cheapest rate 45p other times).

Interest Rates									
UK	Days	Discount	25%	US	Price	0.75%	Japan	0.50%	
Bank of England	5750	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	5500	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	5250	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	5000	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	4750	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	4500	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	4250	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	4000	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	3750	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	3500	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	3250	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	3000	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	2750	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	2500	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	2250	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	2000	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	1750	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	1500	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	1250	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	1000	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	750	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	500	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	250	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	50	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	25	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	10	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	5	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.5	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.25	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.05	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.025	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.01	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.005	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.0025	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.001	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.0005	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.00025	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.0001	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.00005	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.000025	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.00001	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.000005	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.0000025	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.000001	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.0000005	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bank of England	0.00000025	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
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20 business

THE INDEPENDENT • Saturday 14 September 1996

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098

Footsie poised to crack 4,000 as Dow bounds

TOM STEVENSON
and DIANE COYLE

Dealers are braced for the FTSE 100 index of leading shares to break through the psychologically important 4,000 mark next week after reaching another record high yesterday. The latest surge was fuelled by inflation and retail sales reports in the US that calmed worries of an imminent rise in American interest rates.

Footsie ended the week at 3,967.9, up 35.3 points yesterday, buoyed by another strong morning session on Wall Street and hopes for strong earnings reports next week from many of Britain's largest companies.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average surged in early trading to break through the 5,800 barrier for the first time, topping its previous high-water mark of 5,796.1, set almost four months ago. American shares were buoyed by strong bonds which received a boost from government figures suggesting prices for goods and services rose 0.2 per cent in August, lower than the expected 0.7 per cent rise.

In London the latest climb capped a buoyant run since the beginning of August during which time the index of leading shares has added more than 7 per cent. Dealers said yesterday, however, they were sceptical of the strength of the rally given the relatively low volumes of shares traded.

The 620 million shares that changed hands yesterday represent little more than the market's estimated break-even trading volume and traders expressed concern that the August rally has been largely technical with market-makers pushing prices higher simply to cover their positions.

In the US, however, the bull run appeared to gain momentum with the New York Stock Exchange imposing its "down tick" rule after a 50-point rise in early dealings to limit certain types of computer-guided trading and check volatility.

Wall Street's fears that the Federal Reserve would raise US interest rates after their next meeting on 24 September evaporated after figures showing tame headline inflation and surprisingly weak retail sales last month. Analysts said yesterday that after the latest economic signals the Fed would not act until after November's presidential election, if then.

"The economy is close to full employment but there is no pick-up in inflationary pressures. It is the kind of economic performance we have not seen for a generation," said Chris Iago, an economist at Barclays in New York.

Jan Harwood at Kleinwort Benson said: "There are three Clinton appointees on the Federal Reserve board of governors. The question of a rate rise has now been put back until at

least the 5 November election." The consumer price index rose only 0.1 per cent in August, taking the headline inflation rate down a fraction to 2.9 per cent.

There was no sign of the expected increase in energy prices despite the impact of higher oil prices further back in the inflation chain. Prices for "apparel and upkeep" - clothes and personal goods - fell 1.4 per cent during the month and 1.5 per cent year-on-year.

Joe Carson, an analyst at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell in New York, said: "The Fed just does not have the evidence of inflation in the pipeline it would need to raise rates."

Retail sales rose by only 0.2 per cent last month after falling in June and scarcely rising in July. In real terms they have fallen slightly since May.

Robert Rubin, Treasury Secretary, said: "Inflation is not rearing its head; we have solid growth, low inflation, and I think these numbers prove that."

With growth close to its long-run trend, the financial market reaction to recent economic figures has been extremely volatile. Strong monthly employment reports have sent share prices tumbling four times this year. But growth in consumer spending appears to be subdued.

Among those expected to reap the highest rewards are corporate financiers who have burnt the midnight oil, putting

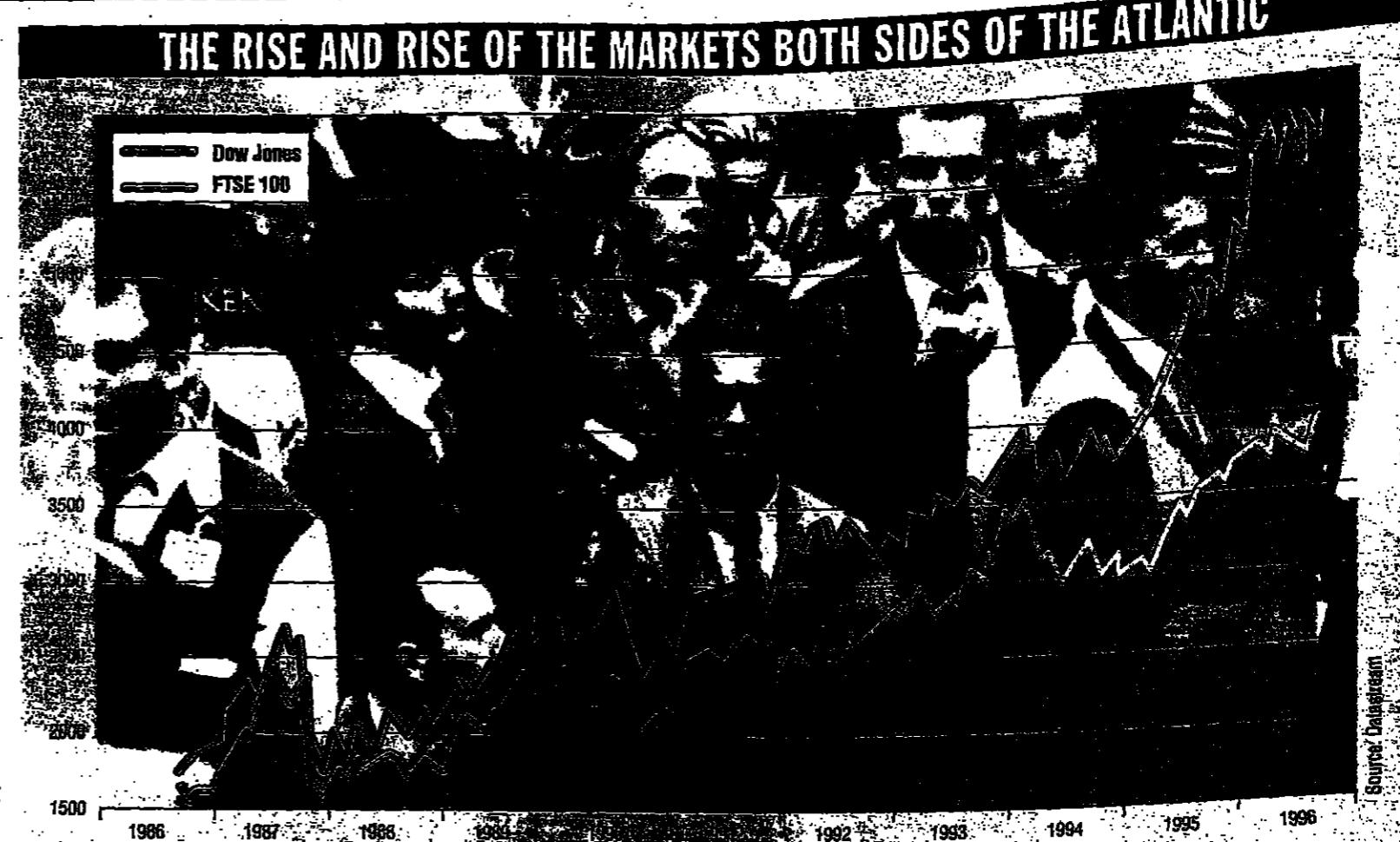
together deals that have included the takeovers of Forte, MAI and Trafalgar House. And those dealers who use their firms' money to bet on the markets - known as proprietary traders - are also expected to have had a good year.

September is the time the directors of the top City firms sit down and work on the budgets for the following year. It is also the time many of them start to pencil in the bonuses with which they will reward crucial staff.

Judging from the profits

Investment: High yields, low expectations
Market report: Nat Power generates a glow
Money pages in the Weekend section

CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER



City heads for new bonus bonanza

JILL TREANOR
Banking Correspondent

Top City staff are expecting bumper bonuses this year after a busy 12 months in the corporate finance arena and a steady climb in the equity markets. Many will be hoping to double their salaries in what looks like being another lucrative year for mergers and acquisitions work.

Among those expected to reap the highest rewards are corporate financiers who have

burnt the midnight oil, putting together deals that have included the takeovers of Forte, MAI and Trafalgar House. And those dealers who use their firms' money to bet on the markets - known as proprietary traders - are also expected to have had a good year.

September is the time the directors of the top City firms sit down and work on the budgets for the following year. It is also the time many of them start to pencil in the bonuses with which they will reward crucial staff.

In corporate finance and M&A it's very much a story of strong bonuses of over 100 per

cent of salary," one of the top

headhunters in the City said.

Such executives are already

earning basic salaries of around

£75,000. Some of the stars, at US

firms such as Merrill Lynch, will

be taking home six-figure

bonuses, even before their

salaries are paid.

Mergers and acquisition work

remain one of the driving

factors in the UK economy as indus-

tries continue to consoli-

date in fees for organising the

deals. Lazard Brothers alone ad-

vised on four public bids with a combined value of almost £5bn in the first six months, guaranteeing a highly profitable year.

The steady rise of the FTSE should have made it easy for the wheelers and dealers on firms' proprietary dealing desks to make money.

"On the equity side the market has done phenomenally well and will be good news for traders who bought at the start of the year and sat on their positions," said one senior market source.

Takeover talks lifts Cobleigh

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Managed pub operator Tom Cobleigh looked to be heading for an early exit from the stock market last night after it said it was in talks that might lead to a takeover bid being made for the company. Its shares jumped 24p to 236.5p, more than 50 per cent higher than the 150p at which they were placed only last November.

The company refused to add to the stark statement or to give an indication of when there might be further news but speculation focused on Yates Brothers as a potential suitor. Yates, which operates in the Northwest, is known to want to move into the Midlands and South where Cobleigh is strong.

Key to any takeover is the 50 per cent stake held by European Acquisition Capital, a venture capital group that backed Cobleigh before flotation and which has made it clear it would like to sell out. Recent market gossip had the stake being sold to Yates as the springboard for a full bid at about 270p a share.

Shares in Tom Cobleigh have been strong in recent weeks in anticipation of a swoop following the announcement in June that Hambrs was looking for a buyer on behalf of EAC.

Other potential bidders linked with Cobleigh in recent months have included Whitbread, whose expansion of its managed estate accelerated with the acquisition of the Pelican chain of French brasseries.

The froth surrounding Tom Cobleigh is just the latest manifestation of a remarkable year for the pub sector which has seen most of the key players trading on multiples well in excess of the market average.

BNFL boss's £315,000 puts him at top of tree

MICHAEL HARRISON

The chief executive of British Nuclear Fuels, John Taylor, has become the highest-paid head of a state-owned company with an annual pay package potentially worth £315,000, it emerged yesterday.

BNFL's 1996 report and accounts show that Mr Taylor, who joined the nuclear waste reprocessing company in March from the oil group Exxon, will be paid a basic salary of £25,000. In addition, he will be eligible for a performance-related bonus of up to 40 per cent which could net him a further £90,000.

The previous chief executive, Neville Chamberlain, was paid a total of £201,429 last year while BNFL made a contribution to his pension of £16,995.

A spokesman said that BNFL, operator of the Sellafield plant in Cumbria, needed to pay a market rate to attract a candidate of Mr Taylor's ex-

perience and ability. He is on a one-year rolling contract and received no special joining fee or bonus to compensate him for loss of share options.

BNFL added that its boardroom remuneration practices fully complied with the Greenbury code. Mr Taylor's annual performance bonus will depend on hitting profit, cash flow, safety and environmental performance targets.

The company made a pre-tax profit of £316m last year. The wages bill, including social security and pension costs, for its 13,451 staff was £404m which works out at just over £30,000 per employee. In 1994-95 the average wage cost was £29,300.

Mr Taylor's pay makes him the best-rewarded chief executive of a state-owned industry. The next highest-paid post in a state-owned industry is chief executive of the Post Office.

Bill Cockburn, who held the job until last October, was paid £256,740 including bonuses in

his last full year. His successor, John Roberts, was paid a total of £204,535 last year.

Sir Bob Reid was paid £200,000 a year during his time as chairman of British Rail while Bob Hawley, the chief executive of the newly privatised British Energy, was paid a total of £258,000 including bonuses in its last year as a state-owned business.

Mr Taylor, a chemical engineer by training, spent 26 years with Exxon Chemical rising to become the European vice-president of its polyolefins business. In 1993-94 he received £18,750 basic pay for his one month with BNFL and a pension contribution of £1,638.

John Guinness, BNFL's executive chairman, saw his pay, including bonuses, rise from £104,837 to £112,228. The highest paid non-executive director was Professor Alistair MacFarlane, the vice-chancellor of Heriot Watt University, who received £17,000.



Right chemistry: John Taylor joined BNFL from Exxon

Goldfish launch angers Ofgas

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

British Gas and would then look at whether any action would be appropriate.

"It would have been nice to have been made aware about this earlier," an Ofgas spokesman said. He said that Goldfish, which gives British Gas customers 1p off their gas bills for every pound they spend using the card, could raise potential competition issues.

If the card is deemed by Ofgas to be anti-competitive, the regulator could intervene under fair trading laws.

Executives see the card as an important step towards diversifying British Gas into lucrative

new areas as it prepares to face full nationwide competition in the residential gas market, due in 1998. The company is expected to lose a considerable chunk of its share of the market to rival gas suppliers.

If Goldfish is successful, other financial services products are planned, including a form of insurance which could guarantee to pay utilities bills.

The joint venture with HPC Bank intended to capture a substantial share of the plastic card market was announced last week with a £10m television advertising campaign.

Mike Alexander, managing

director of British Gas Trading, the gas supply division, had argued Goldfish was "the first implementation of our strategy to bring additional benefits to our customers and added value to our shareholders".

Yesterday, the head of one independent gas company, which plans to compete with British Gas for residential customers, claimed the card would be ticked off consumers.

A spokesman for British Gas said that the company believed Goldfish did not raise any issues which involved Ofgas. "We've made them aware of it as a courtesy as much as anything else."

Problems at Morgan Grenfell a one-off, says City watchdog

JILL TREANOR

Problems with Morgan Grenfell Asset Management's unit trusts were a one-off in the industry, claimed Inovo, the investment management regulator, yesterday.

As signs emerged that investors were buying back into Morgan's three troubled funds, Inovo said its survey of 99 per cent of unit trusts showed only 13.12 per cent of them held small amounts of unquoted securities of the type that caused the Morgan Grenfell fiasco.

Inovo's research showed that

the total value of such investments in other unit trust represented 1.79 per cent of the portfolios and that only 17 trusts reported holdings in pre-listed securities - those which are in the process of seeking stock market listings. The fund management firm, owned by Deutsche Bank, suspended Peter Young, fund manager, after discovering he had been hiding the scale of investments in unauthorised Luxembourg shell companies.

At one stage, some of his investments in unlisted securities reached 30 per cent, breaching limits set by regulators which say that no more than 10 per cent of a fund may be invested in such stocks.

Philip Thorpe, chief executive of Inovo, commenting on the figures, said: "These figures confirm that the vast majority of unit trusts are only invested in quoted securities. Even where a few trusts do hold unlisted securities, they represent a very small percentage of the portfolio and are within the requirements of the regulations."

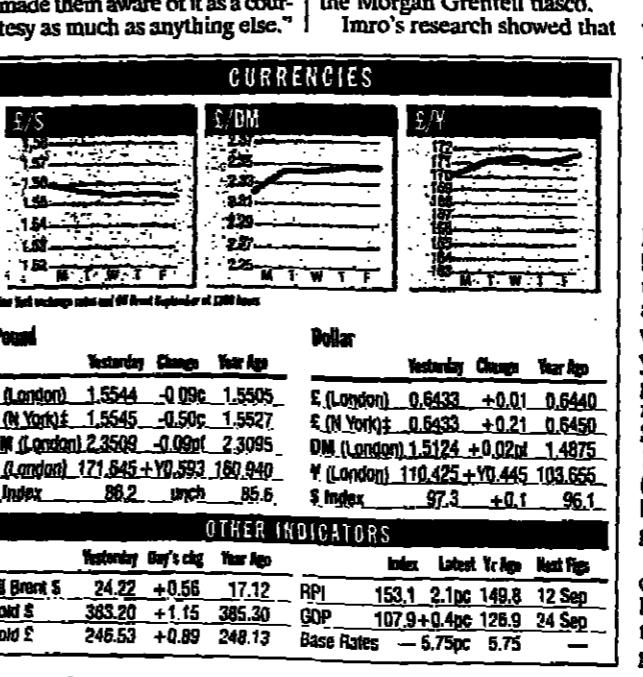
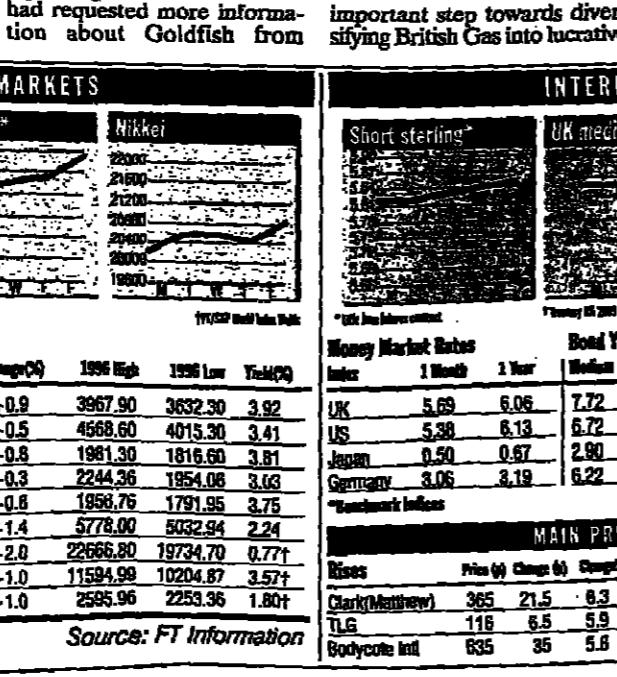
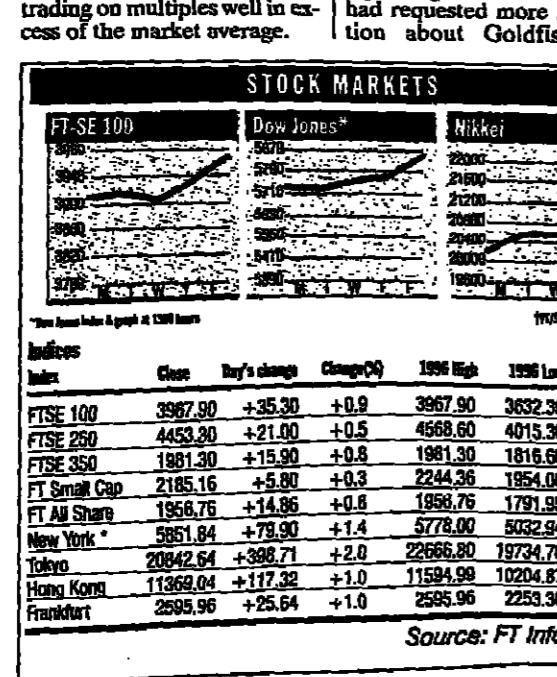
Flat beer sales prompt warning by Heineken

Heineken, the world's second-biggest brewer, yesterday rocked the Dutch stock market after it issued its first profit warning and announced that six years of double-digit earnings growth were over, at least for now, writes Magnus Grindom. Shares in the Dutch group sank 11 per cent or 40.20 guilders (215.25 to 322.50 guilders), having bounced off a low of 312 guilders at one stage.

As well as brewing the lager of the same name, Heineken has recently expanded its interests in France and Italy. The group suffered from lower beer volumes after a poor summer in Europe, which accounts for nearly three-quarters of sales.

Although net profits rose 6.1 per cent to 297.75 guilders in the first half, that was lower than expectations and Heineken warned full-year profits would be "slightly lower" than the 664m guilders run up in 1995.

Karel Vuurenstein, chairman, said: "In nearly all of Europe there are signs of static beer markets. This is leading to price competition, with prices and margins for standard beers being particularly under





JEREMY WARNER

Take the case of British Telecom. It has no cash mountain as such, but it has a balance sheet of such size and strength that arguably it could afford a couple of billion pounds' worth of equity cancellation and barely notice the difference.

Another day, another share buyback, a special dividend or some such other play for giving out vast amounts of supposedly surplus cash to shareholders. The propensity of British industry and commerce to say, "we cannot find any decent use for this money, maybe you, the shareholders, can", and then to do it out with a flotter of £50 notes seems to know no bounds. In the past three months alone, more than £4bn has been returned to shareholders in the form of special dividends, share buybacks and the like. The total for the three years over which these schemes have been fashionable must be well into double figures. This is over and above ordinary dividends, which are themselves rising strongly.

Encouraged by the big City fund management groups, many of which are able to get significant tax breaks on corporate distributions of this type, companies as diverse as Boots, Guinness, Rentiers, Barclays and National Power have all climbed aboard the bandwagon. It is a phenomenon which in part helps explain the present buoyancy in the stock market, for all that money has got to be reinvested in some way or other.

Why is it happening, and is it a good thing? To the latter of these two questions, I have to confess a sneaking suspicion that it is not. The backdrop is the focus in modern management techniques on cost cutting

and efficient use of capital. Cost cutting has transformed many companies into highly cash generative machines. This has combined with a period in which corporate cash resources have been building anyway because of relatively sluggish levels of economic activity.

In the old days it would have been thought acceptable for managements to find a home for such surpluses in diversification and general reinvestment. Not now, where after some truly disastrous experiences in corporate diversification the demand is for companies to focus on their core expertise and functions, and to hone what investment they do make into carefully costed projects and enterprises. Institutional shareholders have tried to encourage managements to think of capital as a scarce resource, and to treat it with the reverence it deserves.

As a consequence, a great many companies have found themselves with more money than they actually need, or certainly know what to do with. This is especially the case with the utilities, which with the benefit of hindsight, were plainly hugely overcapitalised when they were privatised.

Take the case of British Telecom. It has no cash mountain as such, but it has a balance sheet of such size and strength that arguably it could afford a couple of billion pounds' worth of equity cancellation and barely notice the difference.

barely notice the difference. The fact that it hasn't yet done so perhaps tells you more about BT's need to avoid the avaraging hand of the regulator and the politicians than its ability or otherwise to undertake such an exercise. Certainly BT is under a lot of pressure from the City to follow others with what would amount to the mother of all buybacks. In the end, however, anything on this scale may be just too politically sensitive for Sir Ian Vallance and his colleagues on the BT board to contemplate.

It might also finally prompt the Government into action on the tax front, for whatever the commercial pros and cons of these schemes, there can be little doubt that they are also powerfully motivated by tax considerations. The mechanics of these considerations are perhaps too complicated to explore in any detail in a column of this length, suffice it to say that the Inland Revenue is losing out quite seriously and that the public purse is the poorer as a consequence.

This is because a share buyback or special lump sum payment is treated for tax purposes as if it were a dividend distribution. Tax on such dividends is paid directly by the company to the Inland Revenue in the form of advanced corporation tax, which in most cases can be offset against mainstream corporation tax. Tax-exempt shareholders such

as pension funds and charities can then reclaim those tax credits from the Revenue. In a share buyback, therefore, a pension fund gets not just the market value of its shares, but a 20 per cent tax credit on top. Since the cost of this, in most cases, is being offset against mainstream corporation tax, the Inland Revenue loses out accordingly. The tax credit is paid out for money that would otherwise go to the Treasury.

Why the Revenue has allowed this process to continue largely unchallenged for so long is a bit of mystery for it can readily be seen that it is the public purse which is funding the bonanza element in these schemes. It is not all one way, of course. A big corporate distribution means a larger tax take from those who do pay tax. But since that tax too can be offset by companies against mainstream corporation tax, the effect here is neutral. There's no two ways about it, the Treasury is losing out. That the money is going largely into people's pensions obviously mitigates the problem from a public policy perspective, but it does not excuse it.

But there is actually a rather wider concern about these schemes. Plainly it makes sense for a company when it cannot find a decent use or return for its money in its own business to give it back to the capital markets. If the markets work as they should, the effect is to redistribute capital from those

who don't need it to those who do. It may not always work this way in practice, but that's the theory. The trouble is that the pressure on companies to follow fashion is now so intense that there is a real danger of overindulgence in something which in moderation is probably not a bad thing.

With interest rates at their present level, it can actually make sense to borrow money for a buyback – quite a few do – for the effect is earnings enhancing. To the purpose of tax efficiency should therefore be added that of financial engineering. It is hard to generalise, but it may well be that some companies are doing something which in the next downturn, when interest rates turn sharply up once more, they will live to regret.

Any business run for cash is also one which is highly likely to be underinvesting for the future. I'm not saying here that we are heading for a full-blown repeat of Michael Milken's 1980s junk bond revolution, a deliberate programme of equity cancellation and its replacement with debt that had quite disastrous consequences for large swathes of US industry. But we may be seeing the beginnings of something similar in mild form. Shareholders should think long and hard before forcing managements into such schemes, for it is they who will be tailoring these companies out if it transpires that the process has gone too far.

Wembley's pitch for new stadium

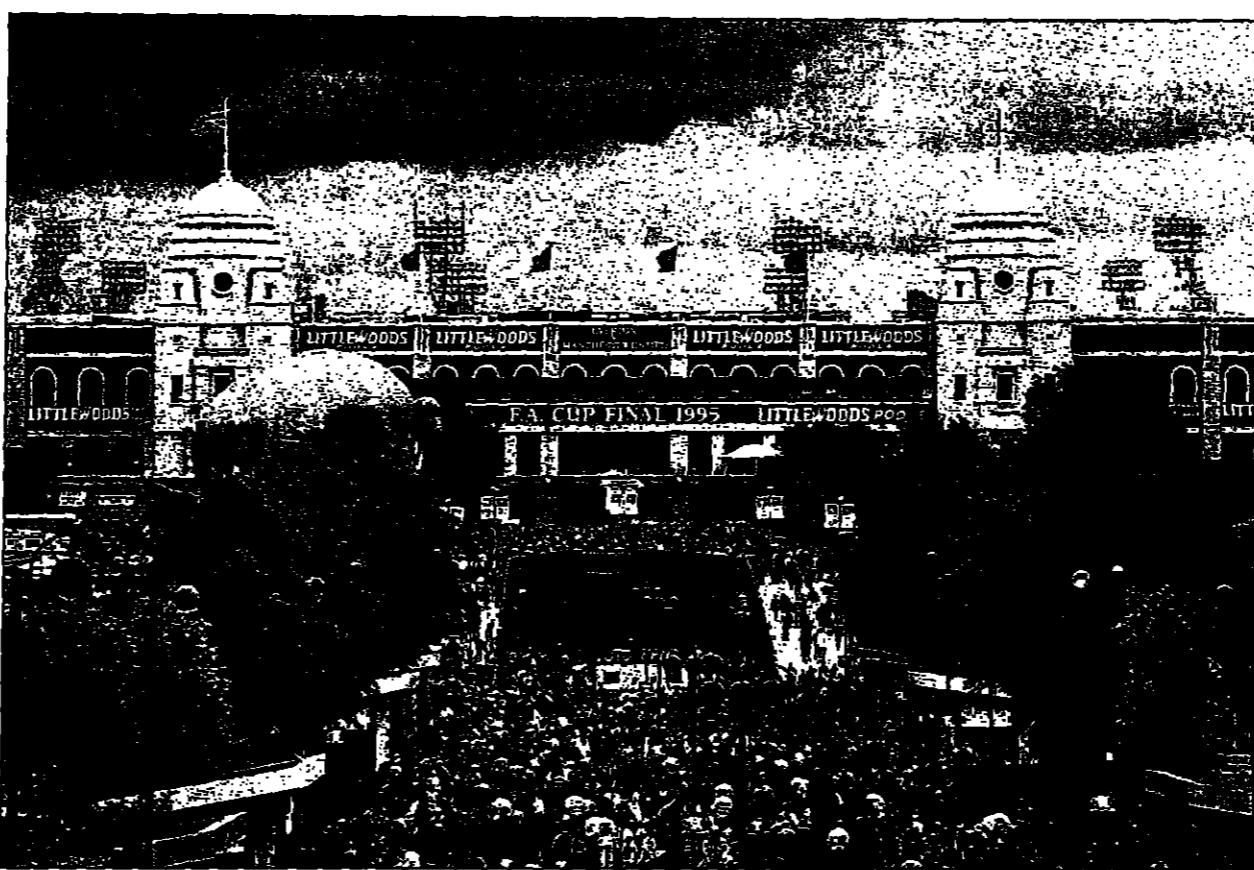
PATRICK TOOHER

venue that could host the World Cup and Olympic Games. The Sports Council has informed Wembley that a decision is expected by the end of the year.

Apart from Euro '96, which saw Wembley host six matches including the final, Mr Coppin also cited the stadium's capital city location as another reason its bid should succeed. "We are already the de facto national stadium," he added.

Around 65 per cent of the funding for Wembley's national stadium bid will come from the National Lottery with initiatives such as the sale of debentures and executive seats providing the rest.

Sir Norman Foster, the award-winning architect, has announced radical plans for the stadium including the repositioning of its famous twin towers and the capability for adding a retractable roof – a feature regarded as essential for any new outdoor, state-of-the-art sports and entertainment



Twin towers: A radical plan by the architect Sir Norman Foster would see these repositioned

complex given the variable British weather.

But Mr Coppin said a recent visit to Holland to see the new Amsterdam Arena's sliding roof in action had left him unimpressed. Sir Norman's design, he added, was only notional: "If Wembley wins, the final design

will be decided by an international architects' competition later next year."

Mr Coppin was speaking after Wembley announced a 72 per cent rise in operating profits to £15.8m. Profits from Wembley Complex, which includes the stadium, rose to

£7.9m from £3.4m. Euro '96 was responsible for only £500,000 of the increase.

Wembley Arena benefited from hosting 72 concerts, up from 63 a year ago, while extra rental income lifted contributions from the conference and exhibition centre.

Profits from the Keith Prowse hospitality division increased to £1m from £400,000, due entirely to Euro '96.

Operating profits from UK greyhound tracks were unchanged at £1.4m despite poor winter weather and competition from scratchcards.

Societies condemn UBS report

NIC CICUTTI

Several of the UK's biggest building societies, including the Nationwide, Woolwich, and Alliance & Leicester, have failed to make the top 10 list of creditworthy societies, according to a report published yesterday by UBS, the Swiss banking group.

Among the reasons for the societies' relative poor showing were arrears problems and excessive running costs, together with the ownership of high-volume, low-profit margin businesses.

The UBS report, compiled by building society analyst Rob Thomas, places Woolwich in 15th place, while Alliance & Leicester is 11th.

However, the UBS table was yesterday attacked as misleading.

doing so would have added £1.3m to profits in 1995. The society estimates that its profits for 1996 would increase by £26m.

Brian Davis, chief executive at Nationwide, which comes 14th on the UBS list, said his society had refused to contribute to Mr Thomas's report because of its concerns over its nature.

Mr Davis said: "This report tries to add apples and pears. For example, we are referred to as having one of the highest arrears problems of any society.

But the solution there would be simply to repossess, which is not what we are about."

Mr Thomas said his list was not an attempt to score societies in terms of whether they offered the best mortgage or savings or simply had bad arrears problems.

In the case of the Yorkshire,

The top ten

	1995	1994
Halifax	1	1*
Northern Rock	2	3
Yorkshire	3	4
Coventry	4	1*
National & Provincial	5	18
Britannia	6	12
Bradford & Bingley	7	11
Abbey	8	
West Bromwich	9	45
Birmingham	10	

* Indicates joint first.

Abbey National is included for the first time

Broker tells Kepit shareholders to sell

NIC CICUTTI

The increasingly bitter battle for control of the £500m Kleinwort Benson European Privatisation Investment Trust (Kepit) took another twist yesterday as NatWest Stockbrokers advised its clients to ignore rival bids and dispose of their holdings.

The advice came as the directors of Kepit rowed with rival bidders TR European Growth (Treg) over a valuation of 101.5p placed on Kepit shares.

Treg's costing of its offer to Kepit's 65,000 shareholders followed the passing of its deadline for acceptances of its offer. A second deadline has now been set for 3pm on 4 October.

Treg claimed yesterday that it was able to be almost certain of its price for each share and attached warrant, issued at 100p, because it had struck an exclusive deal with a trader at less than half the price normally charged for programmed trades. Its claim was challenged by Kepit, which demanded further details.

Kepit is backing a joint deal between Kleinwort Benson and M&G, giving shareholders a choice between a new European privatisation unit trust, run by Kleinwort Benson, an existing M&G European and General Fund; or units in a new Kleinwort Benson Money Market Trust, which could be instantly redeemed for cash.

Stanley Leisure is currently trading "well ahead" of last year and said it would be disappointed not to exceed the record profits for the 1994-95 interim figures. Betting margins were well above expectations in May and June, but fell back in July and August. Nevertheless, turnover is up in both the core business and in acquisitions, including Gus Carter. The latter was likely to produce profits at the higher end of expectations, the company said.

Tomkins said the company's current trading performance was "ahead of budget and last year's level". The group told the annual general meeting that the outlook "is excellent and we look forward to extending our 15-year unbroken record of growth in earnings and dividends backed by strong cash generation". The trading environment is generally favourable and overall order books are ahead of the same period last year. The company said its food companies in the UK were maintaining profit growth.

Jan Lang, President of the Board of Trade, has extended by ten weeks the time allowed for the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's investigation of the proposed acquisition of Mid Kent Holdings by General Utilities and Saur Water Services. The deadline will now be 9 December. Mr Lang has also approved a variation to the terms of the original reference, allowing the MMC to report on whether an actual merger has already taken place.

Underperforming high yielders discredit the O'Higgins theory

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

High-yield stocks have underperformed the market by a wide margin this year, despite conditions that might have suggested the reverse – principally, low interest rates which, all other things being equal, would make shares paying a high dividend relatively attractive.

BZW, which recently studied high yielders, calculated an unusually high and unexpectedly high average yield premium to the market. At this stage in the economic cycle, the broker claimed, relatively strong growth ought to make dividend cuts less likely, negating the need for high yields to compensate.

Yield premiums of the current order are also more usually achieved in periods of high inflation and interest rates.

There are two main reasons this anomaly might have come about. Worries about possible attacks on the level of ACT (which institutional funds can claim back) might be expected to hit shares for which income was perceived to be a greater part of overall return.

Secondly, the high level of recent special dividends and share buybacks has meant that many funds have been less dependent on high

yield stocks for income. Faced with big cash inflows institutions have shied away from the greater risks implicit in high yielders.

All that has been bad news for two high-income portfolios we created at the beginning of the year using the so-called O'Higgins theory, which gained prominence a couple of years ago after years of steady outperformance and which has equally steadily underperformed ever since.

The O'Higgins share selection technique, adapted for the British market from its US origins, is briefly this: Take the 10 highest yielding stocks in the FT-SE 100; of these take the five with the lowest share price or, if you prefer, the five with the lowest market capitalisation, hold them for a year and repeat the exercise.

According to the theory, these stocks should outperform because they are unduly out of favour (hence the high yield) and due for a bounce, relatively safe (in the FT-SE 100 index of leading shares), but small enough within that universe (low market value or, more crudely, low share price) to be able to grow meaningfully.

As the two tables below show, the theory has been better in the abstract than in reality. We created two portfolios, one on the basis of low market value and one on the basis of low share price.

yields for a good reason.

Hanson's appearance at the head of the high yielders at the end of last year has been justified by the terms of its four-way merger this year which will almost certainly see a large cut in shareholders' income.

National Grid has hit by the electricity industry regulator's recent transmission price review and British Gas continues to be plagued by its onerous take or pay contracts.

BZW believes high yielders may be set for a return to favour, especially now we have seen the best of the period of buy-backs and special dividends, but the O'Higgins formula has a lot of catching up to do – its 1995 last time is not being paid.

Thus protected, profits soared from £275,000 to £1.09m in the six months to 27 July, and, as forewarned, the interim dividend of 1.85p last time is not being paid.

But stripping the wreckage of the old businesses away reveals that trading profits slipped from £1.35m to £1.25m in the continuing operations. To be fair, the figures would have looked better had there not been a £118,000 hit on translating the profits of Liberty Japan, of Storehouse and Boddington fame, is still enjoying a honeymoon period. The executive directors appointed

in the spring have had their feet under the table long enough to announce a massive reshaping of the upmarket stores group, but not long enough to be blamed for a pretty pedestrian first-half trading performance.

Yesterday's half-time figures are made murky by the decision to cut all 20 of the group's regional stores and shake up the remainder of the group. A swathe of exceptional items, including £3.75m of losses and costs relating to the closure of businesses with the loss of 350 jobs, absorbed close to a third of the £18.7m charge taken in last year's figures for the restructuring.

Plans to extend the successful airport shop format to Continental gateways such as Schiphol and Charles de Gaulle and to the Far East should help. More optimistic perhaps are current studies hoping to squeeze a third or more space from the Regent Street store.

Failure to deliver will incur the wrath of Brian Myerson, the South African who speaks for 17 per cent of Liberty. Profits of £4m this year would put the shares, up 15p at 43p, on a stratospheric p/e ratio. With 44 per cent still in the hands of the family, outside investors will find it difficult to cash in on the recovery. Hold.

Exceptionals take a Liberty

The new management at Liberty, led by the chairman, Dennis Cassidy, of Storehouse and Boddington fame, is still enjoying a honeymoon period. The executive directors appointed

market report / shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100

396.9435.5

FT-SE 250

4423.321.0

FT-SE 350

1382.215.0

SEAG VOLUME

685.7m shares,

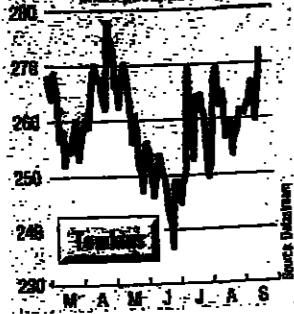
40,103 bargains

Gates Index

N/A

National Power generates a warm glow for punters

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



National Power, free from the inhibiting influence of its final call, was a leading player as blue chips surged to another peak. The shares glowed 14p higher to 396.5p, following a long period of decline. Its smaller rival, PowerGen, gained 10p to 493.5p.

The generators were on the high wire as the FT-SE 100 index stretched to 3,967.9, a 35.3-point gain. Its rampant form indicated the tantalising 4,000-point barrier would fall next week.

New York, hitting new peaks, was an important influence with the latest Washington statistics easing the pressure for an interest rate increase. Government stocks scored gains of more than £1, their best performance for weeks.

Trading levels remained uninspiring and the market is still squeeze. The second-line index, up 21 to 4,453.3, is still

more than 100 points from its peak, hit in April.

NP has been under the whip since takeover hopes, which took the shares to 605p, were killed in the spring. Then its 10p special dividend had to be extracted and the shares, with the final call weighing heavily on sentiment and prompting a run of small selling, fell to 375p. PG, which has failed to produce a 100p extravaganza, topped 600p in April. In recent weeks, too, felt the impact of partly-paid shares becoming full-paid.

As the Iraqi stand-off rumbled on, oil shares continued to make headway with British Petroleum hitting a 655.5p peak, up 8p. Defence shares also felt the Iraqi tension with Rolls-Royce climbing 8p to 243p, British Aerospace 12.5p to 1,062.5p and Vickers 9.5p to 275p. LucasVarity gained 5p to 245p, helped by stories it intended to sell its aerospace side

giant to Pratt & Whitney, the US giant.

Tomkins enjoyed an upbeat trading statement, putting on 9p to 272p and Inscape, figures soon, improved 7p to 303.5p. A 16.2 per cent advance in western European car sales also helped sentiment.

Superstores missed the fun. The latest round of price cutting, nothing more than the traditional autumn positioning ahead of the Christmas price promotions, unsettled the market and prompted price cuts on the share front.

Tesco, leading the present charge, fell 5p to 306p and J Sainsbury lost 4p to 382.5p. Asda was little changed at

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

108p and Safeway lost 3.5p to 334p.

Matthew Clark's three-day free-fall came to an end with a 21.5p recovery to 365p. Suggestions Guinness could be interested in the hard-hat cider maker helped the token rally.

Whitbread fell 6p to 700p. Salomon Brothers advised a switch into Scottish & Newcastle. Tom Copleigh, the pub chain, jumped 24p to 236.5p after confirming takeover talks were under way. The group's biggest shareholder, a venture capitalist, has declared its intention to sell its stake.

Courtaulds, up 10.5p to 469.5p, responded to a Barclays de Zoete Wedd buy recom-

mendation. Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch giant, continued to benefit from its US investment presentation. Disappointing figures from Nestle, the Swiss giant, could prompt caution to creep into Unilever forecasts. The shares rose 13p to 1,386p.

The arrival of newspaperman Andrew Knight at Home Counties Newspapers prompted an 18.5p gain to 367.5p. Berkis, the old commodities group now deep into bathrooms and kitchens, struggled to stay above its year's low as the market fretted about industrial problems. The price lost 8p to 150.5p.

St Ives, the printer, jumped 23p to 457.5p; Merrill Lynch and ABN Amro Hoare Govett made bullish comments.

Pan American Resources put

up 50,000 shares, taking its interest to 10.1 per cent. Easynet's decline continued, down 4p to 38.5p. It is due to produce figures on Monday.

World Fluids plans to raise £25m through a placing and open offer to buy a heavy equipment group and a fork lift hire firm. Talks continue to take over Peterhead Crane Co. The shares remains suspended.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: x Rights issue; X Dividend paid; u Unlisted Securities Market; S Suspended; P Party Paid; pm Nil Paid Shares; ± AIM Stock

Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

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FT-SE 100 - Real-time share prices

UK Stock Market Report

UK Company News

Foreign Exchange

Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can access this service. For a detailed description of the

Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0800 123 333.

For assistance, call our helpline 0771 573 4375 (930am - 5.30pm).

Call cost 3p per rate, and 4p at all other lines. Call charges include VAT.

Stock Price Chg Vol P/E Yield

Business Post 100 100 100 100

CBT Group 200 200 200 200

Citibank 100 100 100 100

Citrus Corp 100 100 100 100

Commerzbank 100 100 100 100

Dai-ichi Life 100 100 100 100

Davidson 100 100 100 100

Deutsche Bank 100 100 100 100

EWI Ref 100 100 100 100

First Direct 100 100 100 100

First Great Western 100 100 100 100

First Trust 100 100 100 100

sport

Tuigamala catches up with Guscott

Rugby Union

DAVID LLEWELLYN

Bath on Wednesday night was a watershed. It was when realisation dawned that 100 years of bitter separation had merely starved union of imagination and talent. After the appetiser in midweek, today will show that what was regarded traditionally as a game for southern soffies now has a hard centre or three.

Bath's league imports, Henry Paul and Jason Robinson, delighted an enthusiastic Recreation Ground with their adventurous play on their debuts. If they lacked something in defence, they will quickly learn the ropes, but their attacking skills are prodigious and unquestioned.

Today the arrival of Vaea Tuigamala in the middle of the Wasps back line sets up an intriguing encounter with Paul and Jeremy Guscott. The England centre, who leads Bath in

the absence of Phil de Glaville – described as rested rather than dropped – had refused to take part in the Rugby Challenge at the end of last season when Bath and Wigan played each other in their respective codes.

Guscott's refusal to participate meant he avoided a confrontation, or rather collision, with Tuigamala. No chance today. The Recreation Ground will shudder with each impact. The trio of league boys are familiar with each other's game but, as Tuigamala points out, he has an edge: "I have a good reservoir of rugby union experience. It's been my game for all but two years of my sporting life." Unlike Tuigamala, neither Paul nor Robinson has any experience of the 15-a-side game before last May.

Bath need to win after last week's setback at Leicester, but the pacemakers, Harlequins, must fancy their chances at home to London Irish. Yet another league centre, Gary Connolly, partners

Will Carling in the centre to add some spice to a Quins back line already brimming with talent. How Harris becomes the third scrum-half to be used by the London club, but Paul Challinor is holding on to his stand-off berth despite Carling's much publicised ambition to play there.

Northampton entertain unchanged Bristol without Gregor Townsend so England's Paul Grayson takes over at No 10. Rumours that Tim Rodger might switch to lock were unfounded and he stays in the back row.

■ Tom Smith, the Watsonians loose-head prop, has become the first high-profile player this season to be suspended for fighting. Smith, who was on Scotland's summer tour to New Zealand, has been given a three-week suspension. The 24-year-old was sent off against Jed-Forest on 31 August after exchanging punches with Gavin Kerr, who has received the same sentence.



Vaea Tuigamala, the new Wasps centre, training yesterday for today's encounter with Bath. Photograph: Robert Hallam

Wasps well pleased with their slick new abode

And so the new era was ushered in. The black shirts emblazoned with the distinctive black and gold Wasps ran out on to the blue and white expanse of Loftus Road, home of Queen's Park Rangers football club, and now the home of Wasps too.

The rugby fraternity held its breath – including Chris Wright, the man who, in a matter of weeks, had uprooted 130 years of history and tradition by transporting Wasps rugby football club across west London to a stadium very obviously purpose-built for football. It was a big and brave step, another litmus test for the professional game.

The Wasps faithful admitted to a cautious apprehension. Many were disillusioned and highly sceptical, but their very presence bore testimony to their curiosity and anticipation, dare I say excitement, at the new venture.

The appeal of an afternoon at the Wasps' old ground in Sudbury stretched far beyond the action on the field. The relaxed, engaging welcome from the unpaid veterans on the gate, the ad hoc parking arrangements on the outside pitches, the stroll to the bar for a pre-match beer before seeking a familiar vantage point. Not a turnstile, or a barricade in sight. The convivial

These were the images that we took with us. What on earth could

atmosphere during the game, spectators from both teams tightly packed together sharing good humoured banter. And then to the bar where officials, players and spectators mixed alike. All the while children chased each other across the pitch in impromptu games, before seeking a familiar vantage point. Not a turnstile, or a barricade in sight. The convivial

Loftus Road provides us rugby folk? The answers were soon apparent. At first, gates were bolted, routes were manned, supporters were instructed and directed, responses were curt and officious. Soon the ground was increasingly opened up and attitudes and responses had changed. At 2pm – an hour before kick-off – a relaxed and good natured atmosphere had developed. Many restrictive notices

within the stadium, we were told, no longer applied. It was as if Loftus Road was shedding its skin and revealing a friendlier, more welcoming side. The plethora of orange coated stewards looked as bemused as their new visitors. By the end everybody, it seemed, was working together. Emerging into the stadium proved a memorable, ground breaking moment. This was a 19,000 all-seater stadium; this

was a beautifully manicured playing surface; this was a venue fit for internationals from all over the world. Over 8,000 spectators were watching what, in effect, was just another league game – club rugby had arrived.

One could not help contrast this with where we were 12 months previously. The endearing features of Sudbury that many were so loath to relinquish already seemed part of a distant, bygone era. Loftus Road had rapidly become part of the increasingly accepted new face of rugby union. And it was mighty impressive.

But the playing of rugby union

at Loftus Road will need a far longer trial period over which to be judged. However, in the face of hostile criticism and many unfavourable preconceptions, this game was just another league game – club rugby had arrived.

Undoubtedly many came to

view this initial experiment with an open mind and the presence of ambitious neighbours possessing Meers Lynagh and Selby is sure to have further swelled the crowd. But Wasps and rugby by union can rightfully feel proud. The fans provided on Sunday will undoubtedly have whetted many appetites. The vision is bright, Mr Wright.

LONGCHAMP – Sunday
2.00 PRIX VERMEILLE (Group One) 3YO fillies 1m 4f Penalty Value £105,402
1. 21/22 SHAMARDAA (25) (Ags Khan) to Roche-Dupe 9-0 ...G Moore 6
1. 1-2621 ZAFALZA (57) (Ags Khan) J Cox 9-0 ...Martag 4
3. 1-27012 BENT SALSAL (22) Hamdan Al Maktoum) J Dunlop (GB) 9-0 ...W Cannon 5
4. 2-03122 PAPERING (59) (Sheikh Mohammed) L Curran (GB) 9-0 ...L Detter 2
5. 63-1122 TULIPA (47) (Sheikh Mohammed) A Fabre 9-0 ...Gollot 8
6. 6-22322 CAMILLE (28) (Ecurie Fabre) P Demarest 9-0 ...A Junk 10
7. 12-1317 LUNA WEELS (22) (L. Lagardere) A Fabre 9-0 ...J Jamet 7
8. 7-513 L'EMMA (26) (Matthews Breeding) P Guest (GB) 9-0 ...C Amstutz 1
9. 11-4224 LEONIA (42) (Strassu R Colle) 9-0 ...D Rose 8
10. 12-1322 MISS TAHITI (38) (D Wakkens) A Fabre 9-0 ...O Peeler 3
– declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Miss Tahiti, 7-2 Papering and Zafalza (coupled), 9-2 Shamardaa and Zafalza (coupled), 11-2 Lunas Weels, 8-1 Bent Salsal, 18-1 Camille, 25-1 others

3.10 PRX NIEL (Group 2) 3YO colts & fillies 1m 4f BBC2
Penalty Value £52,701
1. 33-3191 RADOVERE (53) (Abdullah) A Fabre 9-0 ...J Jamet 5
2. 24/1112 D'ESTIN (42) (M Debusch) P Demarest 9-0 ...A Junk 2
3. 31-1117 TARTOR (21) (Sahib) L Curran 9-0 ...J Detter 1
4. 12-3222 POLARIS FLIGHT (77) (M Abdulla) P Cappelle-Henr (GB) 9-0 ...J Reid 7
5. 5-1207 ARBATY (31) (Ags Khan) P Bay 9-0 ...O Amstutz 9
6. 3-12111 PALATA (38) Compact (GB) P Peeler 9-0 ...P Johnstone 8
7. 23-4362 LEONIA (42) (Strassu R Colle) 9-0 ...A Junk 8
8. 31-1111 TARTOR (21) (Sahib) L Curran 9-0 ...J Detter 8
9. 11-1851 HELISSO (77) (E Saatchi) P Cappelle-Henr (GB) 9-0 ...O Peeler 4
10. 5-4174 GRAPE TREE (70) (M Abdulla) P Cappelle-Henr (GB) 9-0 ...J Reid 4
– declared –

BETTING: 4-5 Helioso, 7-2 Tartor, 8-1 Leonia, 10-1 Grape Tree, 10-1 Radovere, 12-1 Water Post, 18-1 Arbaty, 25-1 La Death, 33-1 Palata

3.40 PRX DE LA SALAMANDRE (Group One) 210 BBC2
colts & fillies 7f Penalty Value £52,701
1. 7 SACHTOR (50) (Abdullah) A Fabre 9-0 ...J Jamet 5
2. 2-02628 SOLID ILLUSION (38) (Ecurie Fabre) P Demarest 5-9-2 ...A Junk 3
3. 5-42125 LEEDS (21) (R Soult) H Van de Lethouze 9-0 ...T Ques 7
4. 1-2017 WATER WEELS (22) (L. Lagardere) A Fabre 9-0 ...J Detter 1
5. 1822 DAME D'HARVARD (USA) (22) (U. Schindler) R Colle 8-11 ...O Peeler 4
– declared –

BETTING: 8-12 Palata and Sacristan (coupled), 8-12 Rovos, 11-2 The West, 8-1 Dame D'Harvard

4.15 PRX FOY (Group 3) 1m 4f Penalty Value BBC2
£105,402
1. 113-312 SWAN (57) (Sheikh Mohammed) A Fabre 9-0 ...J Jamet 5
2. 2-02628 SOLID ILLUSION (38) (Ecurie Fabre) P Demarest 5-9-2 ...A Junk 3
3. 13 THE WEST (USA) (29) (Prince Fahad) P Odeh 9-0 ...T Ques 3
4. 1-2017 WATER WEELS (22) (L. Lagardere) A Fabre 9-0 ...J Detter 1
5. 1822 DAME D'HARVARD (USA) (22) (U. Schindler) R Colle 8-11 ...O Peeler 4
– declared –

BETTING: 8-12 Palata and Sacristan (coupled), 8-12 Rovos, 11-2 The West, 8-1 Dame D'Harvard

RACING RESULTS

DONCASTER
1. 1-301 1. CAPE CROSS (L) D'Estin 3-1 2...
2. 1-301 2. VENGEUR (24) (Ags Khan) P Bay 9-0 ...J Jamet 5
3. 1-301 3. GENEVIEVE (24) (Ags Khan) P Bay 9-0 ...J Jamet 5
4. 1-301 4. L'ESTIN (42) (M Debusch) P Demarest 9-0 ...A Junk 2
5. 1-301 5. TORNADO (21) (Sahib) L Curran 9-0 ...J Detter 1
6. 1-301 6. RUMBLE (20) (M Abdulla) P Cappelle-Henr (GB) 9-0 ...J Reid 7
7. 1-301 7. FOREST BELL (20) (Ags Khan) P Bay 9-0 ...J Jamet 5
8. 1-301 8. STORM TROOPER (21) (S. Prince) 9-0 ...J Detter 1
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ST LEGER: The season's final Classic sees the 10-times champion jockey aboard a colt with the pace to prove critics wrong

Dushyantor can complete Eddery's renaissance

When Pat Eddery lost his retainer with Khalid Abdullah two years ago there were some who could hear the strains of the last post on his racing career. The music in the Irishman's ears, however, was rather more upbeat. As the leaves begin to tumble there are no signs that Eddery has shed any of his ability and, at the age of 44, he is poised to equal Lester Piggott's post-War record of 11 jockeys' championships. His confederates from the weighing room believe their leading figure remains at the peak of his powers.

Eddery himself detects little change in the effectiveness he has shown all over the world for over 25 years. He describes his riding as "normal". What is not normal however is the pleasure he still gets from proving himself as a top practitioner of his craft. "You can't win enough championships and I'm getting as big a buzz about possibly winning this one than I've ever done," he said yesterday.

Patrick James John Eddery, though, will have to effect another resurrection next season. When Kieren Fallon is given the keys to the stable jockey's cottage at Henry Cecil's yard he will at a stroke remove his fellow Irishman's greatest source of winners. Of Eddery's 152 successes this season, the largest slice has been provided by Cecil, for whom the jockey has a strike-rate of 34 per cent. The imminent divorce, it must be said, has not had Eddery pacifying the corridors at night. "I've been freelance for the last couple of years and it hasn't worked

Henry Cecil's faith can be rewarded at Doncaster, reports Richard Edmondson

out badly has it?" he said. "Next season might be a problem because I won't have the Warren Place horses but I'll still be out there giving my best. I'm not going anywhere because I believe there are still a lot of good years in me."

This afternoon's St Leger allows Eddery to continue his union with Cecil when he parts the favourite, Dushyantor. On the form book the little colt

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Dushyantor
(Doncaster 3.40)
NB: Go-Go-Power-Ranger
(Sedgefield 4.05)

should prove the old adage that the fittest horse wins the 2,000 Guineas, the luckiest the Derby and the best the St Leger. **DUSHYANTOR** (nap 3.40) certainly had no good fortune at Epsom, where he finished strongly behind Shaamit, and has been labelled rather cruelly as an animal without the facility for immediate acceleration.

When Kieren Fallon is given the keys to the stable jockey's cottage at Henry Cecil's yard he will at a stroke remove his fellow Irishman's greatest source of winners. Of Eddery's 152 successes this season, the largest slice has been provided by Cecil, for whom the jockey has a strike-rate of 34 per cent. The imminent divorce, it must be said, has not had Eddery pacifying the corridors at night. "I've been freelance for the last couple of years and it hasn't worked

His chance will be compromised by this ground, however we're right there with Dushyantor on Derby form and he should run well. I think Gordi and Dushyantor are the dangers, and don't forget Mons."

It will be disappointing, however, if Gordi, who won the two-mile Queen's Vase at Royal Ascot, is not outpaced by at least one of his rivals, while Mons has been beaten by quite a few of these already.

Much of Dushyantor's home preparation is conducted in the hands of Willie Ryan. After the colt's latest piece of work, the rider informed that his mount was in the best form of his life.

This is not to say Dushyantor will stroll home this afternoon.

He is not a horse who likes to make matters easy for himself and he also has some well-qualified opponents to overcome, including Shaamit, who finished a place behind him in the Derby. John Gosden, Shaamit's trainer, would like to see a dam break near the racecourse.

"Shaamit is in very good form and won nicely at Windsor," he said yesterday. "He appreciated the soft ground that day and we would like them to leave the watering system here on all night."

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Whatever the fate of his colt this afternoon, Saeed Bin Suroor asserts that Godolphin can give themselves a self-congratulatory pat. "We have only 40 horses, not 250 like other trainers, and have won Group Ones in Hong Kong and France," he said. "Some people were thinking we couldn't do it again after last season [when Godolphin had completed the Derby, Oaks and St Leger] but we've

done it again this year with Shaamit and Dushyantor."

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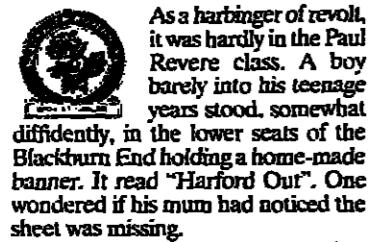
Sport



Ewood memories: Walker welcomes Dalglish (top left); Premiership champions (main picture); Batty and Le Saux come to blows (left); Harford ponders defeat last Monday

Photographs: Empics/Allsport

All dressed up with nowhere to go



As a harbinger of revolt, it was hardly in the Paul Revere class. A boy barely into his teenage years stood, somewhat diffidently, in the lower seats of the Blackburn End holding a home-made banner. It read "Harford Out". One wondered if his mum had noticed the sheet was missing.

Supporters filed out around him. It was moments after Rovers' home defeat by Derby on Monday and their countenances were gloomy, but none stopped to join him. True, there had been a few boos when the final whistle had blown, but they were comfortably outnumbered by the cheerers which acknowledged the team's effort, if not their result.

But if Ewood Park's plastic seats do not host a rebellion, what of the wood-panelled boardroom - a carefully reconstructed relic of the old Ewood, before Uncle Jack came along with his dreams and his millions? Sixteen months ago Jack Walker held the Premiership trophy aloft at Anfield after Blackburn had won their first title in 81 years. Now they are one from bottom with a solitary point from five matches. In such situations the fixture computer usually reveals a sadistic streak. Sure enough, Blackburn today visit Newcastle and Alan Shearer.

Imagine, for a moment, you are Carlos' Kickaball - Alan Sugar's stereotype foreigner. You are unhappy at



Inter Real and your agent tells you Blackburn Rovers are interested. Two months ago that meant playing alongside the hero of Euro 96. It once meant a personal chat with Kenny Dalglish. Now it means a bloke called Ray Harford trying to sell the idea of parting some guy called Chris Sutton. Interested? Jürgen Klinsmann, Pierluigi Casiraghi and Patrick Kluivert were not. Neither, it appears, are Oliver Bierhoff and Martin Dabhol, the latest targets. True, Yorgos Donis signed, but then admitted he had done so to play alongside Shearer.

This is Harford's problem. He is a fine coach but, unlike Dalglish, he did not win 102 caps for his country and he did not win the European Cup. Shearer, Tim Flowers, Tim Sherwood and Graeme Le Saux all signed for Dalglish, not Blackburn. His name gave Blackburn the kudos. The departures of he and Shearer appear to have signalled Rovers' decline just as their arrivals signalled their success.

Unlike Shearer, Dalglish was pushed before he jumped - but Blackburn had little choice. They could put up with his goal-oriented interpretation of the role of director of football, but they could not have him becoming, albeit unwittingly, a focus of discontent. Dalglish's P45 was on its way as soon as some supporters began to call for his return as manager during the opening-day home defeat to Spurs.

Dalglish's departure, though it has

weakened the club's pull, has made little difference to the day-to-day running. He and Harford had virtually ceased to communicate on club matters and his appearances at Brockwell, the training centre, and Ewood had become rare.

Nor was he involved in transfers.

Responsibility for them had long passed to Walker and Robert Coar, the chairman. Harford suggests possibilities then they attempt the deals.

The system is similar to the one which brought Bruce Rioch's downfall at Arsenal and, in terms of attracting big names, even less successful. Shearer's

departure was even more confused.

Everyone in football seemed to know that he had decided it was time to leave except Walker and Coar. Walker offered a week of his earnings against a week of a reporter's that Shearer would stay. The reporter rejects not accepting the bet.

After Dalglish left, Harford faced a public meeting. The mood was grim yet he won them over. It was hard to see how he had done it, until I heard him this week. Howard Harford had just become the season's eighth sacking and Harford knew he could be the ninth.

"I do not understand the reasoning behind those sackings," he said.

"You have a game plan in the summer and to abandon that after five games seems strange. Ours was jeopardised by Shearer going so late. Having waited until after Euro 96 and for Shearer to have a holiday, Rovers found likely replacements had already moved by the time Shearer left. Chris Sutton and Graeme Le Saux were injured, then so were Kevin Gallacher, Jason Wilcox and Paul Warhurst."

"You miss those players," added Harford. "You end up putting square pegs in round holes. I could bring in a couple of kids but, if the senior players are struggling, what will it do to the kids?"

"I will discuss what has happened with Jack and the board. If they come to the conclusion I should go, so be it. I do not feel I should resign, it is a long-term job. I would not fight it if they feel I should go. I wouldn't say I'm doing a great job - how can I? I'm not winning games. I've got no excuses with the injuries."

There was more of the same. Honest, realistic and eminently plausible. Harford has been a victim of circumstance. Given an injury-free run and some new players, one can imagine him turning things around.

But what new players? His signings to date have been ordinary. With wages high everywhere Jack Walker's millions have lost some of their allure.

When Rovers won the title it

seemed proof that money could buy success. Yet they now find they cannot spend it. The area is unglamorous, the football success too recent - or too distant - for any players to have grown up dreaming of the blue-and-white halves.

It is not just players who are staying away. The crowd was below 20,000 at Ewood on Monday night, the lowest league attendance since February 1994 when Wimbledon

was the visitors and half the ground was rubble. It was nearly 8,000 below last season's average, the first wave of fickle fans - those who have known only success and expect it by right - are turning their backs.

They leave a patient hard-core. To

those who had watched Blackburn for years, the last five seasons have seemed like a miracle. In April of last year, as they prepared to celebrate their title, Malcolm Doherty, the Labour leader of the council and a season-ticket holder for 25 years, told the *Independent*: "Sometimes I sit in my seat in the Walker Stand and look round this ground, and I wonder if I am going to wake up and find it has all been a dream."

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When Rovers won the title it

No 153
Leeds United
FAN'S EYE VIEW
by Gavin Burnage

Last Sunday afternoon alarm bells were ringing at Elland Road. I stopped there briefly on my way back down south intending to visit the club shop. No one, it seemed, knew how to stop the noise. It all sounded appropriate following Saturday's dire show against Manchester United, and the state of the club's record over recent months and years, but I dismissed the idea that this corny symbolism meant anything dramatic was about to happen to Leeds United.

There was a side door open on to the pitch, so I walked in past the lawn mower and the Detention Room, getting permission off a groundsman to wander around the ground. I came out of the north-west corner tunnel, by the Radio Leeds room and the Kop. I thought of the times Wilko and the team walked in and out that way at the end of last season while the changing rooms were being refurbished. I stood in front of the new dug-outs, and imagined the views - the joyful occasions, and the occasions like last Saturday which degenerated into abuse and raw anger.

I don't feel like celebrating our managerial change, really. I feel sad that we've had to go through all this. Some results and performances of recent years, coupled with some fans becoming abusive rather than supportive, made it a lean time to follow Leeds.

In one of the many verbal "Wilko wars" on the Leeds e-mail list, I remember Steve Walsh saying "Wilko's a hero to Leeds, and always will be." Maybe now the abuse will stop, and his achievements will be given the dignified gratitude they deserve. He's certainly left a club with a great structure, and great potential for the future. His vision of building Leeds United like Liverpool is something his

TODAY

3.0 unless stated

FA Carling Premiership

P 14 W 12 D 12 F 46 A 52

FA Cup

P 20 W 12 D 11 F 45 A 51

3rd round: Swindon (a) 0-0; replay (h) 0-1; 1st

Coca-Cola Cup

P 14 W 10 D 4 F 32 A 25

2nd round: Swindon (a) 3-2; 0-2

3rd round: Watford (a) 2-1

4th round: Leeds (a) 2-2

Premier League

P 14 W 12 D 11 F 46 A 52

Champions' League

P 9 W 6 D 3 F 14 A 14

9th round: PFC Ludogorets (a) 0-0; replay (h) 0-0

FA Cup

P 20 W 12 D 11 F 45 A 51

3rd round: Swindon (a) 0-0; replay (h) 0-1; 1st

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Coca-Cola

for sale?
1996 Sagamore
Properties

The never-ending search for the new Best, Rush... and Hunter

You read it here: "the next Chris Waddle" is alive and kicking. Preston North End back towards glory. The sloping gait, rounded shoulders and trickery on the wing of 19-year-old Kevin Kilbane have already attracted the attention of, among others, Wimbleton - which might seem strange considering the Dons are not exactly renowned for their love of the finer things in football, a category Kilbane certainly falls into.

I saw him illuminate a thrilling encounter between Plymouth and Preston recently (who said football outside the Premiership was dying?) and decided that Gerry Francis must have clocked Kilbane, given the Spurs manager's penchant for travelling the lower divisions for his next big find (his latest target is allegedly a hotshot from, er, Dulwich Hamlet). But, of course, "the next Chris Waddle" is already at White Hart Lane. Dar-

ren Anderton's sloping gait, rounded shoulders and trickery on the wing led to comparisons with Waddle early on that the new boy found too heavy a burden. "I want to be the first Darren Anderton, not the next Chris Waddle," he said, predictably.

Considering Anderton was only 20 at the time, Waddle's was a hard act to follow. Then again, Lee Bowyer, at the ripe old age of 19, is being groomed as "the next Gary McAllister". And at Charlton, Kevin Nicholls, a 17-year-old midfielder, has been labelled "the next Lee Bowyer" despite looking as if he should still be eating his mum's packed lunches. Much the same has happened at Liverpool where "the next Ian Rush", Robbie Fowler, already has a young pretender at Anfield: 16-year-old Michael Owens, ironically born in the same Welsh town as Rushie.

I bet QPR fans thought they

would never see another Rodney Marsh until Stan Bowles arrived at Loftus Road and was brave enough to don that No 10 shirt. Since then, only Simon Stainrod (arguably) has come close to doing it justice.

Ajax will probably never unearth "the new Cruyff", although they will keep trying. Dennis Bergkamp was heralded as "the new Marco van Basten" when he arrived on the scene; now Patrick Kluivert is the latest to don Bergkamp's mantle. But the world's best players will always bear comparisons. Diego Maradona was "the new Pelé" when he first hit the headlines during the 1982 World Cup, but a succession of young pretenders have since been labelled as "the next Maradona": Claudio Caniggia, Ariel Ortega (who should be called "the next Jürgen Klinsmann") after his dives in the Olympic final against Nige-

ria), and now Parma's £3m striker Hernan Crespo.

David Beckham may have evoked memories of Pelé when he scored his wonder goal against Wimbledon, but in reality there will never be another Edison Arantes do Nascimento. Romario has tried, but has never lived up to it. Now Ronaldo is being called "the new Romario", which

is understandable. Both hail from Rio, both refused to play in the Brazilian Under-20 national side, both were left out of Brazil's USA '94 squad but were reinstated at the 11th hour, both starred for PSV before joining Barca, and both, like Pelé, became world champions at 17. I don't know whether Ronaldo hates tomatoes like Romario does, but as comparisons go, it's not a bad list.

Manchester United could have ended with Beckham being a little more Pelé-like against Juventus. And if only the new George Best? (Ryan Giggs) and "the next Paul Ince" (Nicky Butt) had lived up to their reputations United might not have been outclassed by the Italians, for whom "the new Roberto Baggio" played in midfield. At least Alessandro del Piero looked the part, even if he had sideburns that Malcolm Macdonald might have envied rather than a divine

ponytail. And remember Del Piero's Italian team-mate, Emilio Chiesa, who was billed as "the next Paolo Rossi" before Euro '96? I suppose he did score one goal in the competition...

In his United heyday, Ince was reckoned to be "the next Bryan Robson", but new Captain Marvels have been few and far between compared to the host of "new George Bests". In particular, there was Willie Morgan, who won the No 7 shirt, looked like Best and even clashed with manager Tommy Docherty, and the mercurial Gordon "Merlin" Hill. "Champagne-Charlie" Nicholas was mooted as being "the next George Best" mould, too, although that was probably more to do with his off-the-field lifestyle than any prowess on it.

How Rangers could have done with "the next Ally McCoist" against Grasshopper of Switzerland, a country famous for producing great watch-

ers and chocolate, but hardly great footballers. The Scottish champions did have the original Ally McCoist in their line-up, but he seemed devoid of the predatory instincts that propelled Rangers to within goal difference of the European Cup semi-finals in 1992. The new Ally McCoist is hot off the Ibrox production line: 17-year-old Darren Fitzgerald has been described as "the best thing to come out of Northern Ireland since Norman Whiteside and [inevitably] George Best".

Defenders rate poorly in the comparison stakes. I mean, ever heard of "the next Tommy Smith" or "the new Norman Hunter"? True, Alan Stubbs has been talked about in hushed tones as "the next Alan Hansen", and I did hear Slaven Bilic mentioned in the same breath as Bobby Moore. But I doubt whether the Croatian will command such respect at West Ham should he decide to jump ship.

SHORTS

Ferguson looks on bright side

Football

GUY HODGSON

Another week in Europe, another week to wonder: If the Premiership is among the best Leagues in the world, why do our clubs perform so mediocre against Continental opposition.

Manchester United personify the conundrum. Domestically they dominate, but Wednesday's defeat by Juventus did not suggest the start of a return to the English supremacy of the 1970s and early 80s. Gaucheness seems to have been the problem, as it was against Rotor Volgograd last season and Barcelona and IFK Gothenburg two years ago.

Yet if the mood, exacerbated by defeats for Rangers, Celtic and Arsenal, was despondency, Alex Ferguson had not caught it. Perhaps it was the imminent signing of Barcelona's Miguel Angel Nadal, but the United manager was rigidly optimistic. "If we played Juventus tomorrow I think we would cope," he said. "We would handle them no problem. We learnt a lot about ourselves."

Ferguson, whose team defend a 31-match unbeaten home league run against Nottingham Forest today, also discovered yesterday that Nadal's arrival is almost certain, and he expects the fit-in Spanish international central defender at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

A fee of £2.4m was agreed three weeks ago, although Barcelona may come back with extra demands. "The chairman will have some talking to do," said Ferguson, who believes Nadal's acquisition will make the United squad the strongest in his 10th year at the club.

"We have signed Europeans who can perform on the top stages," he said, while suggesting that his side would differ little from that which played in Turin. Forest, who are the last team to beat United at home in December 1994, have doubts about Kevin Campbell and Bryan Roy to add to the injury that will rule out Steve Stone for the season.

Ray Harford has had injury problems for as long as he has been manager at Blackburn, but his problem now appears to be who he should leave out. Not that he is blessed with riches, but with a choice of under-performing players whose 2-1 defeat by Derby on Monday means they have only one point from five matches.

"Maybe we need a fresh face to lift everyone... possibly the manager," he joked after the last defeat although true words and jest have an uncomfortable knack of coming together, particularly when it comes to managers' jobs. So do fate and former players.

Last week Eric Cantona scored the last goal to be conceded by his former club, Leeds, under the stewardship of Howard Wilkinson and it is not beyond the realms of possibility that Alan Shearer could repeat that today at St James' Park. Shearer plays his first game against Blackburn since the £15m transfer to Newcastle in the summer and is itching to score after missing out in the 4-0 rout of Halmstad in the Uefa Cup on Tuesday. "I'm sure Alan will want to do well," Chris Sutton, Shearer's erstwhile partner and heir apparent, said, "but we have to concentrate on stringing together some results."

Coventry also need a satisfying sequence because if anyone fears finding a new name on his office door more than Harford, it is Ron Atkinson. Paradoxically, the opponents at Highfield Road today are Leeds who will be playing their first game under Wilkinson's successor, George Graham.

Coventry are below Blackburn on goal difference despite spending more than £18m in the last two years but one of those signings, Liam Doherty, believes it is time for the players to repay Atkinson's faith. "Ron has been keeping the lad in splits up and told us that it is in our hands. We have got ourselves into this and are good enough to get out," he said. "We have to put everything to the back of our minds now and forget about the situation we are in."



Whip hand: Karen Bassett, the defending champion, steers her team through yesterday's National Carriage Driving Championships dressage competition at Windsor

Photograph: Adam Scott

GENEVIEVE MURPHY
reports from Windsor

George Bowman and his team of four Cumberland cobs made a good start to the National Carriage Driving Championships, in which the Cumbrian driver is aiming to win the national title for his horse team for the 18th time.

After yesterday's dressage,

Bowman led from his two team-mates in the recent World Championships, Karen Bassett and her sister, Pippa Thomas.

Bassett, the defending champion

Bowman keeps young pretenders at bay

ion, is 4.6 penalties behind Bowman as they go into today's marathon phase.

Bassett is not happy about the eight hazards that she will tackle today with her team of dark brown Trakehner horses.

She regards them as too tight and trappy to allow her to take a fast and flowing route through them, as she did in the World Championships in Belgium,

where the team eventually finished third.

Last year Bowman was forced to retire here when one of his horses slipped up at a hazard and the team became wedged against a post.

"I was probably a bit fast into it," he said. "It's just one of those things, when it comes off you're brilliant and when it doesn't you're a silly fool."

After yesterday's dressage, Bowman led from his two team-mates in the recent World Championships, Karen Bassett and her sister, Pippa Thomas.

Bassett, the defending champion

This will be the last time that Bowman's cobs will compete tomorrow, but the 61-year-old driver has no intention of hanging up his whip. Bob, one of his current horses, will become part of a new team of cobs. He also plans to bring on a young team of Lusitano horses, a breed that originated in Portugal.

Having won individual silver medals in the last two world championships, Bowman plans to have another tilt at the world title in two years' time, when four-in-hand driving will be part of the World Equestrian Games in Ireland.

SPORTING DIGEST

Badminton *WOMEN'S PREMIER GRAND SLAM* (Preston) *Men's* *Finals* that night: D. Holt bt. D. Thompson 15-12; A. McLean bt. C Young 15-8 15-12; R. Moggie bt. C. Crameri 15-5 15-4; S. Pasey bt. S. Foster 15-7 15-12; S. Pasey & S. Foster bt. S. Groom 15-7 15-12; S. Pasey & S. Foster bt. A. Holt & C. Young 15-9 15-7; R. Doherty bt. M. Sharpe 15-12 15-2; R. Doherty & A. Holt bt. C. Young 15-7 15-2; R. Doherty bt. S. Groom 15-12 15-4.

Baseball Bernie Williams hit a three-run homer and a grand slam, driving in eight runs, and David Cone struck out eight over seven innings as the New York Yankees beat the White Sox, gave New York a 3½ game lead in the American League East.

AMERICAN LEAGUE New York Yankees 12; Detroit 3; Cleveland 11; California 2; Chicago White Sox 11; Texas 2; Seattle 8; Kansas City 8; Texas 7; Boston 4; Cleveland 4; Oakland 4; New York 3; Atlanta 4; Texas 2; Minnesota 2; Seattle 4; Milwaukee 2; Texas 4.

NATIONAL LEAGUE Houston 4; Philadelphia 1; Colorado 18; Atlanta 8; Montreal 5; Florida 4; Los Angeles 4; St Louis 3; Pittsburgh 30; San Francisco 4.

Smith eyes second place Laurie Smith may have left it too late to prevent Tim Robinson from winning the overall title in the 1996 Aquatonic Skiff Grand Prix, but, on the opening day of the sixth and final regatta in Torquay yesterday he was determined not to relinquish second place to Adrian Stead, writes Stuart Alexander.

As Brut announced they were withdrawing their support for next year's circuit, Smith, with a one-point margin over Stead, was

kept him safely in sixth.

Bonding Neil Barnes' challenge with Mark Barnes' is likely to take place in Britain in March. The unbroken Barnes' the World Sailing Organisation featherweight champion, yesterday tempted Barnes with a cheque for \$1,250 (22,000) although Ricardo Matiakono, Barnes' manager, countered with a \$1,750 offer for the fight to take place in Los Angeles. Barnes, meanwhile, bids for his 45th straight win when he defends his WBO super-bantamweight championship against the American, Jesse Magana, in California tonight.

Cricket Hampshire have released the injury-hit former England pace bowler Neil Makeloda. The county have also released leg-spinner Andy Roberts and seamer Richard Wild.

Cricket - CHAMPIONSHIP (final day of second semi-final) Gloucestershire 245 (K.W. Stuckey 65, L. Broad 68 and 128, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 243 (K.W. Stuckey 65, L. Broad 68 and 128, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 242 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 241 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 240 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 239 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 238 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 237 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 236 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 235 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 234 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 233 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 232 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 231 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 230 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 229 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 228 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 227 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 226 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 225 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 224 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 223 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 222 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 221 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 220 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 219 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 218 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 217 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 216 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 215 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 214 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 213 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 212 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 211 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 210 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 209 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 208 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 207 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 206 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 205 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 204 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 203 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 202 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 201 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 200 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 199 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 198 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 197 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 196 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 195 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 194 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 193 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 192 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 191 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 190 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 189 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 188 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 187 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 186 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 185 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 184 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 183 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 182 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 181 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 180 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 179 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 178 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 177 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 176 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 175 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 174 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 173 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 172 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 171 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 170 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 169 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 168 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 167 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 166 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 165 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 164 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 163 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Botham 50; Gloucestershire 162 (K.W. Stuckey 65, I.L. Both

